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COMPANY "F"
OVERSEAS



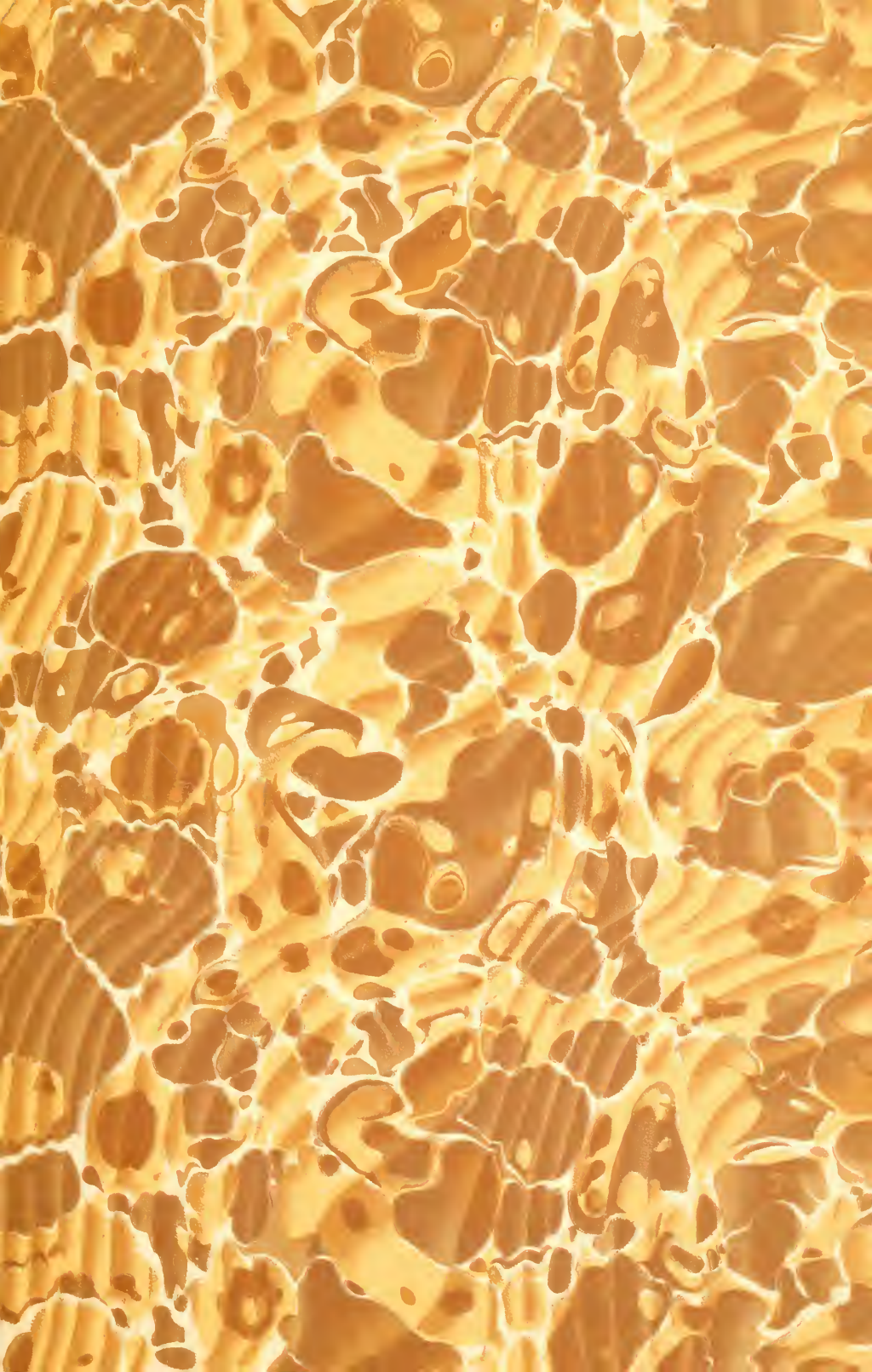


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COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS



BY —
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Company "F" Overseas.

PREFACE



THIS Book is written with a view of placing in the hands of the men of Company "F", 305th Engineers a record of the Company's activities while in France. The Company log-book forms the skeleton on which the story is built. Incidents and notes from the log-book are expanded from the memories of the members of the Company at large. Dates of the principle activities are given, but an effort is made to avoid a diary or a tedious chain of minor movements. Limited as we were as to equipment and supplies while in the forward area, our illustrations are quite few, but those shown are official and were made at the time of our occupation of the district.





CAPTAIN ROCKWELL

Company "F" Overseas.

TO OUR CAPTAIN:

FRED GORE ROCKWELL

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED

Company "F" Overseas.

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Roll of Honor

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—1-Tim., IV-7.

KILLED IN ACTION:	DATE:
PRIVATE JAMES R. SMITH -	NOV. 1ST, 1918
SERGEANT WILLIAM J. CARTHEW	NOV. 1ST, 1918
PRIVATE JOSEPH A. COLLINS -	NOV. 4TH, 1918

DIED OF WOUNDS:	DATE:
PRIVATE FRANK THOMAS - -	OCT. 9TH, 1918
CORPORAL RALPH E. FRAKER -	NOV. 3RD, 1918

DIED OF SICKNESS:	DATE:
CORPORAL GUS WELLS - -	OCT. 24TH, 1918

*"Your Souls shall be where the Heroes are
And your Memory shine like the Morning Star."*
— KILMER.

The Wounded

1ST LT. HENRY G. BUCKINGHAM

M. E. JR. GR., JOHN C. KUNKLE

SERGEANT JOSEPH J. ZILINSKY

SERGEANT ORVILLE V. WINK

SERGEANT FRANK T. FLOYD

CORPORAL MATO FABINA

CORPORAL HERBERT G. BRIGMAN

CORPORAL CHARLIE SUSKEY

CORPORAL JAMES E. MOSELEY

WAGONER DICK DISHONG

*HORSESHOER HERAGEN YUCHINOW

PRIVATE JOSEPH W. BURCHILL

*PRIVATE FREDERICK L. CLARK

PRIVATE ANTONI DANILEVSKY

*PRIVATE ANGELO MOLINARO

*PRIVATE WYATT W. THOMPSON

*PRIVATE HARVEY J. WEBB

*PRIVATE ANTONIO ZANOTTO

(*) These men did not return to the organization after recovery.

THE LAST FEW DAYS AT CAMP LEE.



OLD GLORY



GENERAL CRONKITE'S BUNGALOW (BUILT BY F COMPANY)

The Last Few Days at Camp Lee.



EQUIPMENT INSPECTION



RETURNING FROM THE LAST REVIEW

Company "I" One seas.

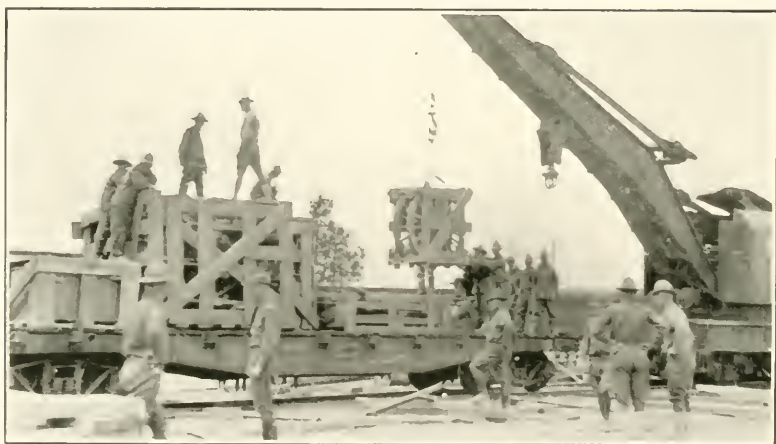


TEXT DRILL ON PARADE GROUND



ALL ABOARD FOR NEWPORT NEWS

The Last Few Days at Camp Lee.



LOADING THE WAGONS FOR FRANCE

Company "F" Overseas.

Company "F" Overseas.

DOUBLE "D"

MAY 25th was just Saturday to most of the people of Virginia, but those living on the line of march from Camp Lee to City Point will agree that it was an unusual day. First call for Reveille blew at 12:15 A. M. and at 1:40 A. M. we departed with everything on our backs from postage stamps to hob-nailed gondolas. The road was dark and the packs were heavy, so we took an easy pace with frequent rests. People rose from their sleep to see us pass, and we blush to admit that some of us were so rude as to throw beams of light from pocket lamps on them, tearing utterly the screen of darkness that they had thought secure. We embarked on the Pocahontas shortly after dawn and arrived at Newport News at noon.

We were first taken to a large field near the dock. Here guards were posted to keep us from straying. The people of Newport News gave us a big send-off. They gathered around the field, crowding in as closely as the sentries would permit. Men and women amused themselves throwing fruit, cigars and chewing gum to us. We scrambled for them like newsboys after pennies. Women who lived near brought piles of sandwiches and small cakes from their homes and passed them across the line. We stayed about two hours then hiked down to the dock enclosure. We sat inside the fence, huddled

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

together in a column of squads. The sun beat down unmercifully but we could not move to shelter as there was none. Smoking was forbidden so we just sat there and cussed the management.

After much waiting and fretting and checking and verifying we walked the aft star-board gang-plank of the good ship HURON and were ushered to a composite state room labeled "DD". That night the freight was put aboard and between the rumble of machinery and the groan of tackle we got very little sleep. The air circulation was poor as the boat was not in motion, so many of the boys flopped on the upper deck. We set sail the following afternoon and towards evening we were congratulating each other on our flexibility as travelers on either land or sea.

Now a few words to describe our quarters. The aft hatch of the well deck had four stairways placed side by side. The treads were of steel and each step overhung the one beneath it so as to leave about two inches in the clear when descending. To turn and descend ladder-fashion was quite safe, but to go down in one's ordinary stair descending manner was dangerous and brought several of the boys to grief. We were forbidden to wear any but garrison shoes on the ship as the heel plates of field shoes would not hold on wet deck or shiny stair tread.

The floor level of "DD" was about forty feet below the well deck, and on the way down it was necessary to be on the alert, for there were three large thwarts in easy head bumping distance. Arriving in "DD" one would imagine he was in a stock room and that the bins were all empty. The bins were canvas bottomed. In each

was a life preserver and painted on each was the bunk number and the number of the life boat to be used in case of an alarm. The canvas in the bottoms of the bunks was entirely too short for a man above average height. The long boys strapped their haversacks across the bunk poles and made a fairly comfortable couch nevertheless. "DD" had an air to it, also an odor. It smelled like "DD", nothing else can express it. After we got to sea the big wind jambers were put up and they ventilated the hold very well.

After breakfast each morning the boys were chased on deck and were not allowed to go below except at meal times. Any time a soldier stopped anywhere he was chased somewhere else by one of our sentries or by one of the crew. "Gangway for a sailor", "Gangway for a petty officer", and "Coming through with hot stuff" were to be heard from stem to stern and from dawn till dusk every day. There was no rule to prohibit one from sitting on deck between interruptions, but the deck was always wet and as soon as it would dry the gobs would have to scrub it again. "You can't stand up here soldier" was the stock phrase of the crew. "The O. D. says you gotta stay on deck" was the standard phrase of the sentries below. And so many of the boys in an earnest endeavour to be obedient spent their fourteen days at sea climbing up and down the hatch stairways.

The soldiers' mess was cooked by the boat crew and served by our own kitchen force. There were two serving rooms for the regiment, so one battalion was assigned to each. The food was good and there was plenty of it, but the trip down to the serving table was not one to stimulate the appetite. The trip back to the deck

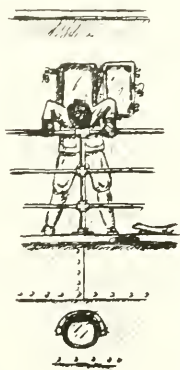
carrying a loaded mess kit up a slippery stairway was a risky one. We ate on deck. The deck, in places where eating was permitted, was so crowded at meal times that there was not room to sit down. Each man stood with his feet apart and his food between them to keep others from walking in it. A lucky few got seats on the hatch covers and in around the ventilators. After washing our mess kits we would stroll up past the officers' mess, gazing in at the spotless linen and sparkling glass, inhaling our dessert as we went.

Every evening at sun-down the "Secretary of the Navy" came around and ordered all smokes thrown overboard. After about a week at sea with him we found that this dignitary did not own the ship but merely acted that way, and that the sailors knew him as the "chief master of arms". One of the mysteries of the trip was: Where did the first light come from in the morning? The smoking lamps in the recreation rooms were never lit and no one was allowed to have matches or lighters, yet no-matter how soon after daylight one would go on deck he could always "Bum a Light".

Every day the siren would blow. Then there was a big bustle, every one would rush to the life boats and stand for roll call and recall. No matter where you went on the boat you had to have with you your life preserver, your emergency rations, and a canteen of fresh water. When we reached the danger zone a navy bugler blew first call every morning before dawn. We would then clamber on deck and watch the gun crews. In case anything was sighted the gunners would be the first to be told so we kept our eyes on them. One morning when we awoke we heard an unusual humming and hurrying

DOUBLE "D"

on deck we saw numerous airplanes and several dirigible balloons. The escort of destroyers was greatly increased and the very air breathed excitement. A few hours later we sighted the cliffs of the French coast, and by noon we were ascending the river to Brest. That evening the company was taken ashore on a large tug. Forty men were left behind to handle the freight.



THAT FIRST WEEK.

THE company hiked through Brest and up the hill to the barracks south of the city. They were the Pontanezen Barracks. These buildings, it is said, were formerly used by Napoleon. Our principle interest in Napoleon had to do with the value of our Francs. The French mint made a lot of francs with Napoleon II on them and later made some with the image of Napoleon III. Now for some reason unknown to the A.E.F. Nap. III. lost his credit in the Banque de France, and they called all of his coins out of circulation. Some say that his head presented an unmilitary appearance, while others uphold the theory that, being "the III", he was of too remote relationship to the great one to deserve the honor of having his likeness placed on a silver coin, but no matter. What concerned us was that if we presented the coin it was "Pas Bon", which is French for N. G., but if a Frenchman returned one to us in change it was as good as anything that the French language will describe. Now, which of the three Napoleons used the Pontanezen we are unable to say, but whichever it was, he certainly had a nasty disposition. We inspected the pillories, gallows, the wall behind the brig, with its rows of breast high bullet marks, and other relics of discipline as practiced in by-gone days. It was a very interesting place. The area was surrounded by high walls with broken glass set along the top to make scaling uncom-

THAT FIRST WEEK

fortable. There was a wash house, a bath house, and plenty of space to stroll in, so the men taken here were in luck.

One platoon remained at the dock as an unloading detail. These men billeted in an abandoned stock yard. In 1918 there were only thirty-one days when it did not rain at Brest, and we were there when the dry season was at its height. The roads around the stock yard were knee deep with fine black dust. The wind was fairly high, and, when leaving the chow line with a loaded mess kit, you could gather enough dirt on one meal to fill a shell hole. At night the dust blew over and covered our blankets so heavily that the sentry would pull out the first few men in the morning and they would then proceed to exhume the rest of the detail. On the fourth day the company came down from the barracks and everybody packed up for a long journey. All who could get any joy developer oiled up to overcome the gloom which our stop at this port had developed.

We left Brest in dilapidated coaches of all three classes. It was our only passenger car trip but we did not fully appreciate it then. Later trips a la 40H.80, convinced us that on this first trip the French railroads were trying to make a fuss over us. We saw "Fumeur" on some of the car doors and assumed that it meant to convey the message that the compartment would hold a few more. We were also surprised to see that nearly every large town was named "Sortie", and that they put the name right over the gate leading from the station platform. After two and a half days of spasmodic bumpings, pushes and long stops, we arrived at Calais. We marched at once through the city and out to a British

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

"Rest Camp". Subsequently after careful consideration it was decided that our stomachs were all that got any rest while there. It was our first association with His Majesty's troops. While there we each received a tin hat, a gas mask and a "Lee Enfield *II" Rifle. We each received a "Pull Through" also. But more of rifle and pull through later. It was a mile and a half across country to the place where this equipment was issued, but the British do not believe in being hasty, so we made a detour of about six miles. Calais was visited by airplane raiders so frequently that all ordnance was stored in dumps outside the town for safety. The trips to the dumps were figured as good practice hikes for the soldiers drawing material from them.

Such journeys occupied the daylight hours. At night the aircraft guns kept everyone awake, so there was no resting done. (Every man that goes to a real rest camp is personally conducted by a regimental chaplain.) One of the big troubles at Calais was that a tent big enough to house five men was assigned to eighteen men and the eighteen had to bring their packs and barrack bags in also. The tall men slept with their feet piled about six deep around the center pole.

We marched through Calais several times in our short stay. There were many Belgian soldiers on leave there. The town showed signs of recent air raids. Many women and children ran after us asking for cigarettes or trying to sell chocolate or oranges. We saw for the first time many little French actions and customs that astonished us and which we were wont to criticize, but, as the novelty wore off, we ceased taking notice of them.

While at Calais we saw more acrobatic stunts ex-

THAT FIRST WEEK

ecuted by airmen than at any other place. On the Sunday morning included in our stay a big dirigible balloon came over our area and flew so low that we could see its maneuvers and means of control very distinctly. Pilots of airplanes also treated us to a few thrills. Then one day we salvaged all the surplus clothes and all the little nice things that we had brought with us in our barrack bags, and the next day we took a little box car ride of about four hours to Samer.

We were prepared to jump from the cars and do battle with the blood thirsty Hun at any moment, for the British had told us that we were about to make a very dangerous trip and that it was entirely possible that we might have to detrain and dig in while enroute, but the most warlike act we encountered was the struggle for seats in the Chevaux cars. Arriving at Samer we took a short rest and ate some hard tack and bully. We then started our hike to——

HALLIGHEN.

WHEN a Frenchman's house becomes dilapidated and no longer fit for a home, he does not repair it, but builds a new one, leaving the old one stand to beautify the landscape. This is also the custom with barns and out buildings. Then in war time, war time comes in France as often as changes in political regime—every premier must have his little war. In war time the tumbled down shacks are labeled "Billet", and the owner opens a government controlled hotel—rates 1 sou per soldier per day.

Hallighen was a beautiful little village. It consisted of fourteen houses, one well, about fifty normal persons, 200 cows, and a village idiot. The village sits on the top of a high hill. In taking up from Samer fat men loose ten pounds and lean men loose their piece of mind and most of their pep. As we climbed to Hallighen we thought of a nice soft bed awaiting us in some Frenchman's house. Being billeted meant that to us then. We found a billet to be a structure with two sides, inside and outside, and with no distinct line of separation between the two.

There was a little valley near our billet where the Mess Sergeant set up his kitchen. He had all the equipment, but during our ten days stay he couldn't borrow, beg, or steal enough rations to make a square meal. We could make excellent time going down to chow, but strengthened and refreshed by the best food procurable,

HALLEGHEN

we could hardly get up enough steam to climb back to our billets after meals. We learned all about the British field ration. We will not describe British bully beef, but will leave it buried in our memories. It should have been buried long before we came to sense its presence. The British make slabs of white tile and call them ARMY BISCUIT. The French make the same stuff in a red



HALLEGHEN.

shade and use it for putting roofs on barns. British jam is delicious but a spoonfull of jam per day will not sustain a soldier under intensive training. The tobacco ration was regular if nothing else. Two packages of "Ruby Queen" cigarettes or a package of "White Cloud" cut plug. The pipe tobacco was rank, but we know that it was not the worst obtainable, for White Cloud had taken many prizes.

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at British expositions. Competition could not have been very keen. As a delightful smoke Ruby Queens are slightly inferior to Corn Silk makings, and slightly better than the Indian Tobies which grow on Catalpa Trees. Ruby Queens had taken twenty-one gold medals. They must have been displayed as a fertilizer or a fumigator.

The town was well stocked with British instructors. They were proficient in the use of the rifle, the bayonet, and the gas mask. There could be no doubt about it. They admitted it themselves. The rifle instructors called their art "Moosketry" and laid great stress on the importance of knowing the name of every screw and gadget from the bayonet boss to the butt-trap hinge pin. Second to this was knowing the proper answer to the great English musketry joke "What is the weight of the pull-through?" The gas mask instructor taught the boys to get into their masks in six seconds. After this was accomplished (we could all do it before we left Camp Lee) he ran games such as leap frog, ducks and drakes, etc., to accustom his class to wearing the masks while exerting themselves. The bayonet instructor had more to show than the others. He had quite a lot of pep in his points and withdraws. Part of his spiel was "Classes Shun", "Classes hup", "At the bloomin Art—Point", "At the bloody throat—Point". His favorite stunt was withdrawing with so much snap as to "Throw the oil bottle out of the butt-trap".

These classes were held in the mornings. In the afternoons we went on hikes wearing tin hats. This was hard at first. We would go out with our masks in the carry position but would wear them all the way back.

HALLIGHEN

A little double time was sprung on us occasionally to see that we were keeping in condition.

When we first came to town prices in the wine shops were low, but the British, to improve their own standing, informed the Estaminet keepers that the Americans had "Beaucoup Francs". Almost over-night Vin Blanc went from 2 to 5 francs and Champagne from 7 to 22 francs. We later found that every time Americans took billets in a town, the village erier would make his rounds immediately, beating his drum and making official announcements. These we construed to be notices to shop keepers to run prices up, and whether he said that or not the result was the same. We still regarded French money as so many cigar coupons and handled it rather carelessly, so the rise in prices was to some extent due to our own prodigality. On the morning of July 4th we packed our belongings on our backs and struggled down the goat path to Mente. That evening we piled into box-cars and started for the forward area. Each carried in addition to his ordinary impedimenta a big double breasted overcoat. None of us had ever stepped out on a July 4th evening with an overcoat before.

BEAUVAL.

BEAUVAL was a town situated about twenty miles behind the line on the Artois sector. We were taken there for some trench practice. The billets were better than at Hallighen, but the chow, although substantially increased in quantity was of the same quality as was issued before. Every morning we hiked up to the British G. H. Q. Line. While there we studied trench systems and practiced wearing our masks for periods ranging from an hour to two hours. The hike back to our billets made a total of about fifteen miles march per day. One night the company went out and qualified at digging in the dark. Corporal Stewart caught his hand under somebody's pick, and gave Major Newbold a little practice at dressing wounds. Excitement ran high when the boys were whistled out after dark. Somebody started the story that Fritz had broken through, but nothing more exciting happened than the building of a splinter-proof rampart around a corral.

A siege of sickness broke out among the New Zealand outfit that had been in town before us, so we were forbidden to enter houses or associate with any of the townspeople whose company might be a prejudice to our health. Two of our Sergeants were caught by an M.P. when leaving a house where they had had some supper. They were forced to submit to medical treatment in no way connected with the eating of chips and beef-steak.

Water was as scarce as it was at Hallighen. Private Claude Webb rigged up a little bathing booth by hanging his shelter half across a small recess between two barns. He then proceeded to bathe with a few pints of water he had gathered in an old hard tack can. The screen hung about ten inches above the ground. Ten inches of Claude, measured from the heels, were visible from the barn-yard. The old lady who owned the billet saw this and went over to investigate. She pulled the screen aside and had a lot of fun kidding him. The bath was spoiled, for Webb immediately forgot all about the precious water and started piling on his clothing.

After about ten days we went forward to Louvencourt. We remained here about ten days. While in Louvencourt we had access to the British bath-house. This was our first chance at bathing since coming overseas. By day we dug trenches and strung wire at points where the British would ultimately retire. In the evenings we watched "The Crown and Anchor" games or listened to the Tommies blowing off about their gallantry. At night we could hear barrages and bombardments, and a day seldom passed that we did not see reliefs going into the trenches or wounded being brought back. We began to know from first hand information that there really was a war going on. After completing a piece of trench behind Louvencourt we moved up to the artillery line and dug in beside Molly—a big six inch naval gun.

Molly had a cute little way of discharging at the most unexpected moments both by day and by night. At night we would see the flash on the sides of our Dog House Tents, and a moment later we would hear a roar that would raise a sleeping man about two inches, drop him

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

with a dull thud, and then throw dirt on him from the sides of the hole. By day the report would cause an internal jump of about ten inches. This was quite a shock to a stomach charged to the rim with bully beef and hard tack pudding. We rested a few days building corrals, razing buildings etc., then started work on our bivvys at the Chateau. In the evenings we practiced baseball,



DUCKING A DETAIL

kicked football, and watched the air-craft gunners decorate the beautiful summer sky.

Every night the top kicker and a couple of carefully selected Non Coms would go on reconnaissance to the near-by town of Souastre. The only engineering equipment the party carried was an empty sand bag and a cork screw. The trips were very fruitful as was attested by the dead soldiers strung along the route in the mornings.

BEAUVAIL

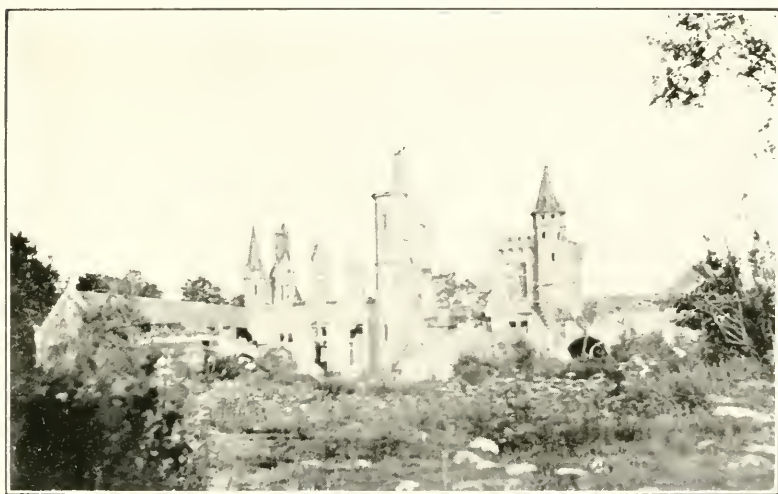
We played two games of base-ball. In one game we defeated "D" Company by a score of 17 to 18. The game was a pitchers' battle. Both pitchers were heavily bombarded. Captain Grunow of "D" Company and late of "F" Company was the most enthusiastic spectator. He was at war with himself, his sympathies for the players were all with "F" Company, but his duty was to support his company team, so he was in as comfortable a position as a dog with a rubber band over its mouth and a can on its tail. He didn't know which way to go. Several days later we moved up to the bivouacs which had been started near Chateau de la Haie.

CHATEAU DE LA HAIE

THE Chateau was a fine big building with a large square enclosure behind it. In the center of the square was a quaint belfry. Forming the four sides were long stables of brick. The buildings were modern and the stables were equipped with the best fixtures. The owner had been a horse fancier and nothing was too good for his steeds. The Chateau sat on high ground about five kilos in front of the German line. It stood in bold relief on the sky line, and was used daily by the German artillery for target practice, and those Dutch gunners could drop a whizz-bang into a derby hat at a range of ten miles. So Chateau de la Haie looked like the last five minutes of a mis-spent life. A short distance from the Chateau, and just over the crest of the hill, was the site chosen for our bivouacs. We dug holes ten feet square, placed half circular sections of corrugated sheet steel over them, dug fox hole stair ways at one end and then filled the hole up. This made a fine home for four men. Nothing but a direct hit could hurt us. At the foot of the hill lay a British battery. Every time a piece discharged the report rang through the bivouac as if a heavy blow was struck on the top of it. One afternoon Major Knight came up to look us over, and rode his horse over a bivvy which had very little earth overhead. The occupants came tumbling out in great disorder. The horses foot had struck the steel covering and they thought they were struck by a

CHATEAU DE LA HAIE

German 210. This was a *quiet* sector. Every morning we went forward at 6:00 A.M., worked till noon, and returned. The distance was about four miles so we usually started from the Bivvy at about 5:00 A.M. Part of the company was engaged in clearing Pigeon Wood. Another part was rebuilding and revetting Stout Trench. A third party was building bivouacs in a combat trench under the direction of the New Zealand Engineers. This



CHATEAU DE LA HAIE

last group was farthest forward, but had by far the most quiet work. The trench repair gang was fired on on four occasions, but as they were working in a trench they were in fairly safe positions. The Pigeon Wood gang had the most exciting job. Every morning things would go as quiet as a lawn party at an old ladies home until 10:30. Then Wzzzzzz—Bowie!!! Sometimes they came one at a time, sometimes three or four at once. At in-

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

Intervals of three to five minutes the iron rations would come over until 11:15 A.M. Then they would call it a day as far as Pigeon Wood was concerned. There were plenty of shell holes, so we had no trouble getting down, except when two men dove for the same hole and stoved each others tin hats. The trip to and from work took us through the village of Fonquevillers. Fonquevillers was pretty well shot up. A few of the buildings were in good enough shape for billeting, but that isn't saying much. The church, situated in the middle of the town, was used as a target for the town. What remains of it is being preserved by the French government as a monument to show to future generations the extent of German villainy and desecration. On the side towards the enemy a portion of one wall stands intact. The remainder is a heap of ruin. The section that stands was materially stiffened by a huge crucifix carrying a large image, which is mounted against the wall on the inside. Nothing hit the wall behind the crucifix. As it stands unscratched in a tremendous and utter ruin it makes an impressive picture. To the religious Frenchman it depicts a divine denial to the German slogan "Gott Mit Uns". The billets were occupied by those terrible, Boche destroying, fearless of man or devil, Royal Engineers. They were laborers used for road repair behind the lines, but the tales they told each other would give you a cauliflower ear. It is not known whether they believed themselves or each other, but it is certain that no one in the "F" company ever took them seriously. One would say "Me laddd were ye oop be Yeeps". And the other would answer "A blawsted beetle couldn't live there". Or it might be the sad tale

CHATEAU DE LA HAIE

of how his brother-in-law had been forced to bayonet six husky Germans that he had stumbled into in a M. G. nest while out on night patrol. Or maybe you might be fortunate enough to find a bird wearing a copper watch fob pendant on his chest of which he would proudly say "This decor-ayshun is for the gallant retreat at Nullepart".

After our days work we would return to the bivvys and spend the rest of the day in recreation. We got along very nicely with our neighbors the "Diggers". These were the New Zealand troops. They had a Y. M. C. A. and Canteen over in an unbattered end of one of the Chateau stables. It was well protected with sand bags and was a fine place to drop in. Tea and Cocoa were always hot and were served "Buck-she". We were as welcome here as if it were our own hut, but not so with the Tommies. Relations between the Diggers and the Tommies were not what one would characterize as cordial. The N. Z. Y., was so good to us that arrangements were made whereby we could in a measure return their hospitality. The regimental band and minstrel troupe stationed at headquarters at Beauval were loaded on trucks and driven up to the chateau. They pulled off a show of which all the Americans were justly proud. About three hundred Diggers were present, and they were as well pleased an audience as any performer could wish for. The band was in usual form with plenty of jazz, ragtime, and pep. The minstrels were at their best. They had never been close enough to hear shell fire before, and after a few real manifestations of shock they became accustomed to the guns and noises, but one end-man continued to pantomime fright, and he made a hit that was nothing short of tremendous.

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

About this time we moved back to an orchard in Bayencourt. It was a "Dug in Camp" with pup tents. We stayed here only five days. Several days were spent working in dugouts near the chateau and the rest of the time we did close order drill. In the evening we guessed whether it would be the "Ook, the die, or the Ould Sargint Major" at so many francs per guess.

Then one evening we were told to retire early as reveille would blow at midnight and we would leave at 1:00 A.M. Well—it rained. We rolled our packs and got underway on a night that was so dark that you couldn't see the man in front of you when marching in a column of squads. We carried two meals with us, Squad Rations. The line of march was Bayencourt, to Authie, to Marienx, to Beauquesne, to Beauval. Between Beauquesne and Beauval we rested for four hours and had a little slum. At 2:00 P.M. we resumed the march through Beauval to Candas to Bernaville. The distance was 23 miles, and was marched with full packs, tin hats and dog tags. The Major said the march hung up a record. He did not know how many individual records it hung up for he was just interested in the battalion. He usually gauged the freshness of the men by the condition of his horse, and that steed was quite a pace setter.

The first night at Bernaville was a festal one. We all had plenty of francs so we proceeded to put them in circulation. A Major of the Ammunition Train found out that an enlisted man is entitled to fifteen pounds of straw for a bunk, and the Mess Sergeant found that Champagne served in a dining room lends class to a meal, whereas champagne served to the cooks does not. The company ration detail drew rations for the entire bat-

CHATEAU DE LA HAIE

talion and delivered them to "F" company. Sergeant Baxter went hunting and bagged a fine big metal rooster that was perching on a nearby church steeple. We were in that town two days. When we left we pulled out at dusk and hiked to a rail-head at Prouville, a distance of three miles. The entire distance was covered without stopping for a rest. We boarded Class "Z" coaches and rode to Chatillon-sur-Seine. These rides remind a soldier of that bit of aiming exercise popularly known as "Push and Pull". Before pulling out we received one



AT MAISEY LE DUC

of the most delightful surprises that ever gladdened a soldier's heart. You will recall that up to this time we had been struggling along with the British tobacco issue. Each man received an Overseas Box from the American Tobacco Fund. It was distributed through the American Red Cross. Each package contained a tin of Tuxedo, four packages of Bull Durham, and three packages of Lucky Strike Cigarettes. They were a bigger treat than any civilian can imagine.

COMPANY OFF OVERSEAS.

We arrived on a Saturday afternoon and started about 5:00 P.M., on a seven mile hike to Maissey-le-Duc. Here we camped in a fine big meadow. There was a stream at its edge. The following day we bathed, washed clothes, swam, loafed, etc. It was a *real* day. At 7:00 P.M. we struck tents and marched eighteen miles. It was part macadam, part cow-paths, and mostly all up hill. We blew in at 6:00 A.M., but most of us were about blown out.

PLUM HILL.

CHAUGHHEY is an old stone village sitting high in the hills. It was a rest billeting town. When a company hiked up to Chaughhey it needed a rest. We arrived at six o'clock on a Monday morning. We slept Monday and policed up the village on Tuesday and Wednesday. It was the cleanest French village we had ever seen, so we tackled the job of making it "Spotless Town." We drained and scrubbed the village wash-house and the big stone watering troughs, we swept all the streets, in fact, we were gluttons for work. Being in a bomb-proof area was a wonderful relief, so we worked off our surplus pep by putting a Tiffany finish on everything in sight. We were only there for a week. It was just our luck. As soon as we had the place fixed up fit for Americans to live in, the "Powers That Be" decided that we should get under way. But before leaving let us finish out the week.

We stood reveille and retreat in a military manner and did a few hours of close and extended order drill each day. It was a rural community, so the boys communed with nature in their leisure hours. Some tastes were agricultural, some were artistic, some were pastoral. The men interested in farming and farm products sampled plums in a nearby orchard or strolled around viewing the fields of Vin Blanc bushes. These with an eye for scenic beauty were enthralled with the morning mists and the multi-colored sunrises and sunsets. The remainder, after putting themselves in the proper mood by partaking of such nostrums and tonics as are avail-

able in a small French town, went forth to pass judgment on the sheep and cattle owned by the villagers.

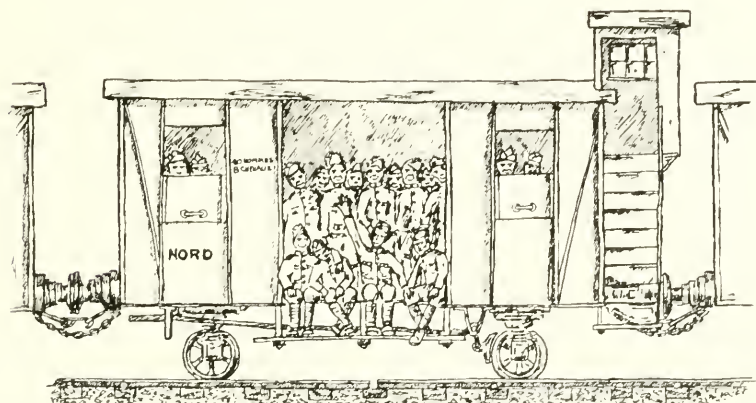
There were several young wives and widows left lonely by this cruel war. They were easy to look at, and a soldier will do anything that's easy. The madames did not resent it, but were rather pleased, so a few of the boys, inspired by their natural desire to alleviate suffering and lighten the load of the burdened, did their utmost to help the lonely ones forget their worries and the cause thereof.

On Friday evening we were told that we were going into action and that we had plenty of hiking ahead, so we should lighten our packs to the minimum. The salvage heap that we put under the old tree in the middle of the town looked like a Q. M. supply dump. We discarded all extra clothing, and with heavy hearts and tear-stained cheeks we parted with our condiment cans, bacon cans, tent poles and pins, etc. YES, WE DID. We had been waiting eagerly for authority to ditch all that junk since the day that it was issued.

The next morning we started the eighteen mile hike back to Maissey-le-Duc. We camped that night on the same field we had stopped on the week before. The next morning we started a fifteen mile hike to Poincon. This trip took us through Chatillon-sur-Seine. We went through at about 11:30 A. M. The people were just coming out of church and many of the Blue Ridge boys were on the street. This may have been merely a coincidence. We arrived at Poincon late in the afternoon and pitched tents in a field about a half mile below the railroad. In the evening we received four big bags of mail. It was very welcome, as we had received none for about four

PLUM HILL.

weeks. We rested that night and all the next day. It was Labor Day and two of our staunch Organized Labor advocates went over to the nearest town and celebrated. The day was bright and clear and quite warm. We washed our clothes in the village wash-house and spread them in the grass to dry. At six o'clock that evening we rolled our packs and hiked up to a space alongside the railroad. Strung along the track as far as we could see were 40-8 cars with straw on the floors and notches in



the wheels. All railroads were represented. Nord, Etat, P. L. M. and P. & O. Extensive travellers in Sunny France via box-car have come to know the roads by different names than are used by the stock-holders. For instance, E T A T means Every Turn Another Thump. N O R D is interpreted, No Officer Rides Dis. P. & O. is said to describe the ride you get which is Pulsating and Ornery. And so it was all along the siding, flat cars, gondolas and box cars, all lined up to take the Engineers up to the Big Show. We ate our evening meal of hard

bread, bully and water while waiting for orders to en-train. We then drew two days' travel rations by squads and at dusk we piled aboard. We knew that we were going some place, for there were about a hundred ambulances lined up to be loaded on cars from the same siding. At least that's the way we felt about it. We never considered such a thing as the ambulances and us travelling by different routes.

Before pulling out, Corporal Welch decided that his car did not have enough rations, so he located a bread dump and put in a supply. We arrived the next day at Tronville. The mess sergeant had nothing to serve with the canned tomatoes and bully except Army Biskwee, so the corporal turned over what bread he had left to be divided among the men of the company. There was only enough left to feed the entire company at noon and in the evening. Brother Ritz could not see that we had a clear title to the bread, so he abstained at both meals. As soon as it was dark we slung equipment and hit the macadam. We marched through Ligny and up a long hill to an obscure little village named Nancois-le-Petite. It was only nine miles, so we blew in about midnight, just well warmed up. It was a mere stroll. Four horses went to Chevaux Heaven trying to climb the hill. The officers were on the alert. The movement was to be shrouded with secrecy, so every precaution was taken to screen lights, smokes, etc., from aerial observation. Sergeant Muldoon had been sent ahead to pick billets. He didn't believe in scattering the company all over town, so he put us all into a barn that was about as big as the body of a liberty truck. We slept in layers. The next day at noon we started masquerading as shrubs and bushes.

THREE WEEKS UNDER CAMOUFLAGE

ABOUT a half-mile from Nancois-le-Petite there was a large hill covered with low shrubbery. We pitched tents on this hill and cut paths, choosing routes where the bushes were high enough to provide overhead covering. The entire regiment was scattered over that hill, and barring an occasional bugle call, or a loud argument, a passerby, or passer-over would not know that there were any other occupants than the woggle bugs and the whiffle-poops. In the valley over the hill there was a stream where we bathed and washed our clothes. The water was colder than anything Doc Cook ever saw, and was so hard that it wouldn't splash. The best cake of soap we had in the outfit lathered as freely as if it was a glass paper weight. Every tent had a couple of heel holes dug in the floor to keep the boys from sliding down hill while asleep. It was here that we tried out the platoon mess. As an army institution it was a tremendous success. Instead of bothering only the cooks and the K. P.'s at meal time, it gave them their usual share of work and loaded about five men of each platoon with a shun slinging job as well. We had a British rolling kitchen, so even though the ration was the finest, and though the cooks were the best, they could

turn out nothing but slum. It rained most of the time we were here, and when it was not raining we knocked down drippings from the bushes as we passed, so that continual rain was well simulated. After three days we took to the roads again. We packed up and started at dusk one evening. It rained by the tub full, and the lightning was blinding. We were hiking at a rate that was almost *double* time. As we passed through Ligny the Colonel happened to see us and he slowed us up. It looked like the rush for first place in a chow line. We marched about a mile beyond Ligny and stopped. It was a nine-mile hike. We flopped on the field at the right of the road, simply throwing our shelter halves over us. At daylight we gathered our belongings and beat it for the woods below the road. The transport was left on the road so it had to be camouflaged with branches. We pitched tents and fixed for a stay. We stuck around for five days. As we had to keep under cover the work was light. We took an afternoon doing a hunt under cover. Another afternoon we shot on a tin can range. Someone would hit the wire at nearly every volley. We then hiked over the hill to billets in Villerencourt, where we lay in reserve for the St. Mihiel Offensive. We were to be ready to go into action that evening. They issued each man a loaf of bread, a pick or shovel and an extra hundred rounds of ammunition. The Colonel arrived in the evening, and when he heard how we were loaded with extra tools and ammunition he ordered the stuff returned at once. He said that his boys were not hauling supplies all over the country. The next day we saw hundreds of prisoners being taken back. They were a disgruntled, half-starved looking lot. Most of them were Austrians.

THREE WEEKS UNDER CAMOUFLAGE

On the third day we were issued lard to rub on our feet. This was a new stunt and we had trouble in dopping out the sense of it, but we put the lard on just the same. On Sunday evening a troupe of "Y" entertainers blew in and put on a show. There were three men and two women. All were clever performers, but the star in our eyes was the younger of the ladies. She was chicken. Why say more! When the show was well under way, Major Knight went up and held a little "Close to the ear" pow-wow with the leader of the troupe. We couldn't figure whether he was volunteering to sing or negotiating for an introduction to the attractive actorine, but we were not held in suspense for long. The actor-man came forward and announced that the show was *fini* and that we were to fall out in full marching order at once.

We embussed an hour later and rode from the St. Mihiel sector to Verdun. It was a six-hour ride. The night was clear and the moon shone brightly. The last few hours of the ride was quite spectacular. We ran parallel to the front line and a short distance behind it. Flares and Very lights were sent up in such large numbers that it reminded us of a fire-works display. The train of trucks was furnished by the French. The drivers were Frenchmen, but the trucks were American Whites. We arrived at St. Andre at 4:00 A. M., and hiked a few kilos to a wooded place where we lay down for a few hours' sleep. At daylight we moved to another stretch of woods nearby, pitched tents, camouflaged them and settled for a four days' stay. Here we did some setting-up exercises, refreshed our memories on lashings,

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

bridge building, etc., and did a little drilling. Our tents were scattered, and under their camouflage, all looked alike. So each night every man was awakened about



four times by the Corporal of the Guard in his effort to get the reliefs out. The evening that we packed up to leave it rained. We packed at eight o'clock, but did not get under way until after midnight. During the four-

hour wait for the command to start we huddled in groups. Some sang, others piled straw over them and tried to sleep. We were dressed light for a hike, and it was a cold night, but sleeping with rain falling in our faces on cold nights was now an old art with us. The rain continued until 6:00 o'clock the following morning. At 8:00 o'clock we arrived at another clump of wood two miles Northeast of Lempire. The road was muddy and we were wet through, and though the distance marched was only ten miles, we were glad to throw off our packs and lie down. We knew we were to move very shortly, so we did not bother digging in, but we had to throw up a rampart around the corral. We were eating travel chow—lump, bread and coffee—but we were going "somewhere" and everybody was on edge. Eats were no consideration. On the second day we packed up at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon and started toward the big noises. The ground was under observation, so the roads had high walls of camouflage on the enemy's side. At Frommeville we changed direction, moving toward the line, so no such cover as we had at the start of the march was possible. We therefore had to stop and wait until

THREE WEEKS UNDER CAMOUFLAGE

after dark before proceeding. The night was a fine one for secret movements. At about 9:00 o'clock we arrived at our new station on a hill near Germanville. It was thickly wooded, and was honey-combed with deep dug outs. We were there with orders to move on a moment's notice, so we pitched tents and disguised them as bushes. The dug outs were wet and had forced ventilation so we were pleased to sleep on the surface and take a chance on an occasional shell. We were there two days. Many pieces of artillery were massed at this point, but did not open fire until midnight of September 25th. Each night the cause of all our troubles let us know that he was still alive by dropping a few gas shells in on us. The breeze was always pretty fair, so the gas cleared quickly.

At dusk on the 24th the first two platoons went forward to get things ready for the big show. The first platoon took the section of road from the dump at Elmes to a point about a quarter of a mile behind the front line. Behind them we strung two companies of Pioneer Infantry which were attached to us as a working party. The second platoon took the piece of road from the first platoon's section forward to the river. Very little work was done in front of the front line trench, for it was unsafe to take many men out, for a flare would reveal the fact that we were making ready for a push. We fixed up all the bad holes from the dump to the crest of the hill. Several of the boys, scraping material to fill holes, were horrified to find that bodies were scarcely covered, and that nearly every place you could set foot was somebody's hastily-made grave. This was not surprising, for

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

we were in the middle of probably the bloodiest battlefield of all history. It was the valley between Le Mort Homme and Hill 304. Here the first battle of Verdun was fought and here untold thousands of French and Germans fell in hand-to-hand combat.

One incident is worthy of mention. Steel I-beams are ordinarily handled roughly, tilted to the edge of the wagon and dropped. Not so on this night. We needed six beams to bolster up the road in a place where it had been badly blown out. Each beam was carried with infinite care. Plate glass was never handled more cautiously. We covered each beam with soft dirt before bringing the next one up, for should a beam be dropped or allowed to strike against another, the sound would have carried volumes of news to the alert German outposts. At 4:00 A. M. we had accomplished all that could be done, and had cleared nearly two miles of road for the advance of our artillery when the drive started. We then returned to camp. It was an exciting trip. The Germans suspected some activity about a mile behind the line and dropped a few dozen whizz-bangs around us. This was followed by eight or ten gas shells. We put on our masks and waited until the gas had blown by. We did not proceed because at this point we turned onto a corduroy road which was in bad shape and very difficult to walk on, and to walk through here with masks in place would be inviting accidents. When the gas had cleared we proceeded to camp without further excitement. The

THREE WEEKS UNDER CAMOUFLAGE

next day we were told to get all the sleep we could, for we were going to need it. So everybody rested. Toward evening we were told to make short packs and prepare for action.



BETHINCOURT PLUS—

EVERYTHING was ready. At 6:00 A. M. the great Meuse-Argonne drive was to start. This was the drive which was to bring home the bacon, but at this time we did not realize that the end was so near. "F" Company arose from slumber at midnight. We had breakfast at once—bacon, bread and coffee—and then started to the front. The bombarding of the German positions was in full swing. The artillery fire was incessant. In the fields of the back area five rows of light field pieces stood hub to hub and extending along the entire sector. These were to lay the barrage in the morning. The heavy pieces in the rear were dropping shells promiscuously over anything German that was in range. The idea was to create uncertainty in the enemy's mind as to where the attack would be launched. The roads were already filled with transport. First came batteries of field artillery in readiness to move to advance positions, then came trucks of small ammunition, then ambulances and finally a few ration wagons.

We threaded our way through all this and arrived at the front line at about 2:00 A.M. The Boche artillery had started retaliating, and things were fairly warm around there. One shell had wounded four men and they were being fixed up along the road side. A platoon of dough boys were getting chow from G. I. Cans, brought up on the narrow gauge at the edge of the road. The air

BETHINCOURT PLUS—

was pungent with the smoke of the guns and there was a little bit of gas drifting around, but it was not dense enough to cause any anxiety. We passed out into "no-man's-land" and scattered in groups of five and six and lay in the shell holes waiting. "B" Company had the river to bridge and "F" Company had to make a trail to the next ridge to take the artillery up in case the Boche retired when we started our push. We were tingling with excitement. Shells were bursting all around us and from away behind came the roar of our heavy guns.



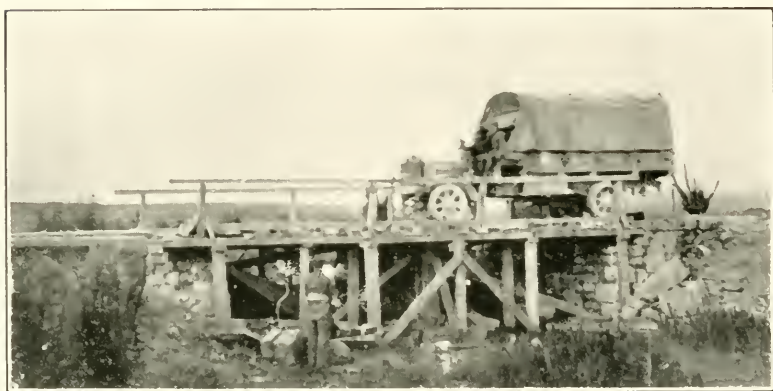
BETHINCOURT

At five o'clock the barrage started. The noise was not what we expected. The number of discharges was so large and the rapidity of fire so great that it was a continual rumble. After a few minutes we became so accustomed to it that we could hear nothing but the soft purr of the shells passing over us. The air was still and

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

the smoke lay in clouds over the fields. We were safe from enemy observation. The doughboys came forward in a skirmish line and lay behind us. At 6:00 A. M. a few flares went up and the Machine Gun barrage started. The Infantry then fixed bayonets and went to it.

We had one old trench to fill down near the river and then we waded across and started clearing a wagon path through what was once Bethincourt. There wasn't enough of that town standing to shelter a pair of field mice. It was flat. Stones from the walls of buildings lay in heaps in the streets, and at one point an obstacle



OUR BETHINCOURT BRIDGE

had been built to join two ruins directly opposite each other. It was 12 feet high and 20 feet thick, and was made with heavy building stone. To clear it was too big a job to attempt in the limited time at our disposal. So we made a trail around it and kept going. It took us just fifteen minutes to build ramps to drive around. We worked like beavers. The road from Bethincourt

BETHINCOURT PLUS—

toward Cuisey was covered. A German trench had been dug parallel to the road, and the earth was thrown across to cover the macadam. This made pretty soft going. The first few wheels sunk about six inches into the soft earth, and then ruts started forming. These had to be filled and tamped as fast as they appeared in order to prevent tie-ups.

We had the artillery up on the next ridge at 10:00 A. M. The Colonel was greatly pleased, we had built a bridge and made four miles of passable road in four hours. **Some Engineers.** That evening the Germans made a stand and there was some brisk fighting. Their defense was made mostly with Machine Guns. Prisoners were taken and started to the rear a few minutes after the dough-boys stepped off, and this continued throughout the day. They were the most virile looking men that we had ever seen coming from the enemy's lines. At St. Mihiel the prisoners were weak looking and poorly clothed, but here the enemy divisions seemed to be high grade troops. They presented a more military appearance. The first prisoner taken in Bethincourt was captured by a Company "F" man.

The wounded started back late in the day. At dusk a large tent hospital was raised in a field below Bethincourt and corrals were established along the road toward Cuisey. In the evening four German planes flew over this area and made a thorough survey of things. They flew too low for the air-craft guns, but they drew a heavy fire from the men armed with rifles. This apparently caused them no concern, but to let us know that they knew a war was going on, they sprinkled us generously with their machine guns.

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

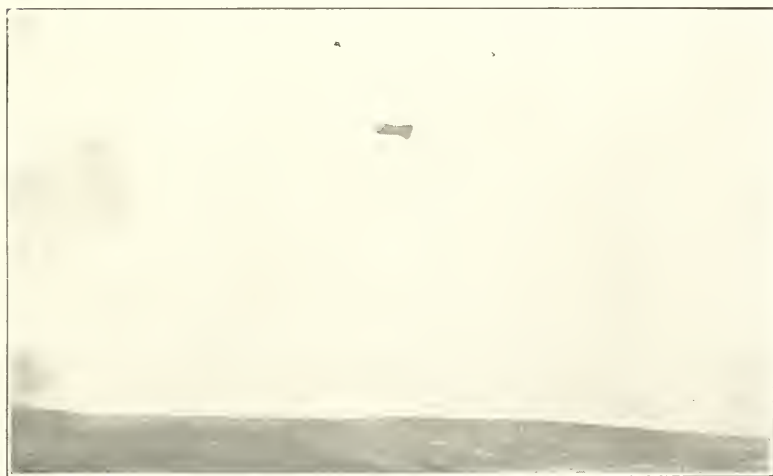
All day long and late into the night we worked on the roads, filling ruts as soon as they formed and starting vehicles that could not proceed without assistance. That night we worked in relays, and on the following nights traffic guards were posted. On the evening of the second day our rolling kitchen arrived and we had a hot meal with bread. We can hardly say how good a meal it was as meals are ordinarily judged, but we all know that up there in the dark, after having had nothing to eat but bully, hard tack and water and mighty little of these for two days, it was the most satisfying spread any of us had ever eaten.

The first two nights we slept in shell holes, with no covering but our slickers. Of course it rained, but our hours for sleep were few, and we were so exhausted that these hardships were too small to notice, and we slept just as well as tired children. On the morning of the third day we had a rude awakening. The German artillery had located us and gave us a thorough bombard- ing. No one in our company was hurt, but that was no fault of theirs, for more than a dozen shells dropped within our area, throwing dirt all over us and cutting anything that was standing high. We lost one horse in this shelling.

That night we moved forward to a German system of dug outs on the next hill. From here we went down on the roads each day. We uncovered the old macadam, and got things going so smoothly that we were able to cut down to six hours' work per day. Our dug-outs were deep, and barring cooties and a few rats, we were quite comfortable.

BETHINCOURT PLUS—

The entire area was freely littered with Potato Masher grenades. These had caps removed so that the unwary might easily discharge them, as the trigger buttons lay exposed. We had no accidents with them though, as careful men gathered them from all frequented places and threw them in shell holes. Sergeant Letourn-eau was badly injured while chopping wood for the stove in his dug-out. The ax struck a dynamite cap which was concealed in the floor and discharged it. His



OBSERVATION BALLOON BEHIND NANTILLOIS

hands and one leg were badly torn. He did not return to the company after recovery.

The fellows salvaged everything they saw that they thought was useful. The most pretentious item salvaged was a pair of three-ton British cargo trucks. Parts were taken from one to repair the other, and, after two days' work the truck was brought up to "F" com-

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

pany headquarters under its own power. The idea was to have a truck to haul our packs. Its service with us was short lived, for after about a week a regular salvage man came along and took it away.

An observation balloon was anchored in the hollow beyond the hill where we were quartered. This balloon had a fine field of vision, so the Germans were untiring in their efforts to keep it down. On the fourth day of the drive seven attempts were made at burning it. Each



BOCHE PLANE NEAR CUISSEY

time the observer descended by parachute. The seventh trip was successful. The plane darted out from a low-hanging cloud and swept down on the balloon. The Hun flier pumped a few tracer bullets into the big green envelope and then made a hasty turn back to the German lines. It is said that the observer received the D. S. C. for his part in the proceedings.

BETHINCOURT PLUS—

After about three days on the hill the supply sergeant came up with a big load of clothes and the Personnel Officer brought up a big pile of francs. We were outfitted and paid. The next morning we went into the line again. We were under heavy fire all day. This was in the section between Cuissey and Sepsarges. Master Engineer Kunkle and Sergeant Wink were slightly wounded with shrapnel, but were able to remain with the company. Corporal Floyd was hit by a machine gun



GERMAN ARTILLERY NEAR NANTILLOIS

bullet and was taken back. The next day two platoons went forward on road work. Eighteen men went up at night to remove three big concrete obstructions on the road near Mont Faucon. The artillery men sleeping nearby were roused to move their ammunition to a safer position as it was too close to the obstructions. When the blasts were fired, anyone that had not been awakened for work were brought to their feet by the shots. They

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

were a lot heavier than anything that the Germans had ever fired at us. The demolition was as complete as a Boche operation on a French cathedral. The next few days the company laid out trenches and put up wire in front of the line in the vicinity of Nantallois. This work was done under continual fire and frequently under enemy observation. Returning from one of these parties, Lieut. Simmons and Private Thomas were hit with shrapnel. The lieutenant was taken to the hospital and returned to duty seven weeks later. Thomas died the day after he was hit. As most of the work was done at night the boys had a few hours of daylight to themselves. During one of these periods a shell dropped close to an "African Golf Tourney" and Private Moseley and Sergeant Zilinsky received slight shrapnel wounds. Corporal Gus Wells was taken sick at this time and was taken to the hospital. He died on October 24th at Base Hospital No. 50 from bronchial pneumonia. After two weeks' residence in the German dug-outs we were relieved. We marched to a wooded space three miles south of Montzeville. Private Wyatt Thompson was missing. Two days later he was reported wounded and received at an S. O. S. hospital.

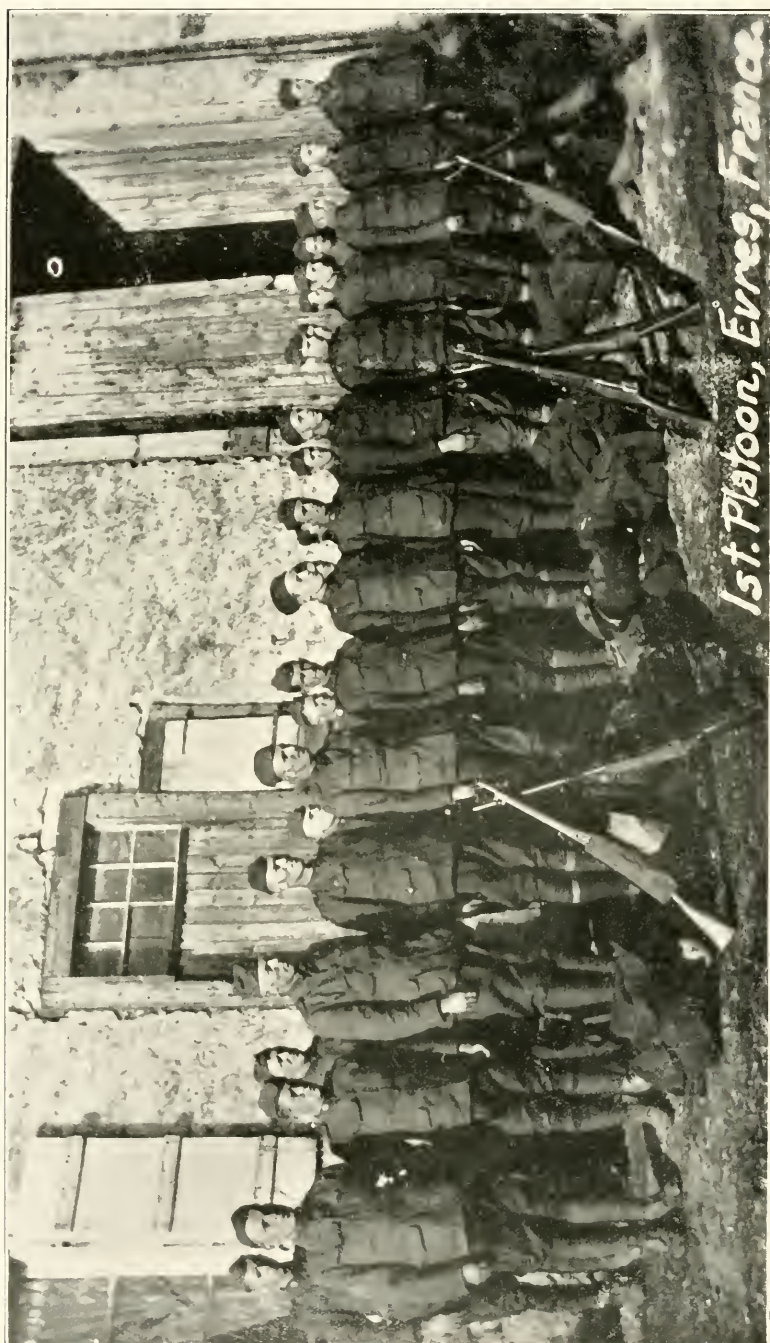
A REST.

AFTER a day in the Montzeville Woods we hiked twelve miles to Ippecourt through heavy mud. The next day we proceeded to Evres. It rained incessantly. Here we moved into billets and stayed a week. During the first few days equipment was cleaned, new clothes issued, we were de-cootyized, etc. There were plenty of *oofs and chips* and a fair grade of beer for sale. The billets had plenty of hay in them and aside from the work of fixing up the kitchen and doing some "East and West" it was a good rest. Here they made the new Top-Kicker and made his former assistant the new Supply Sergeant.

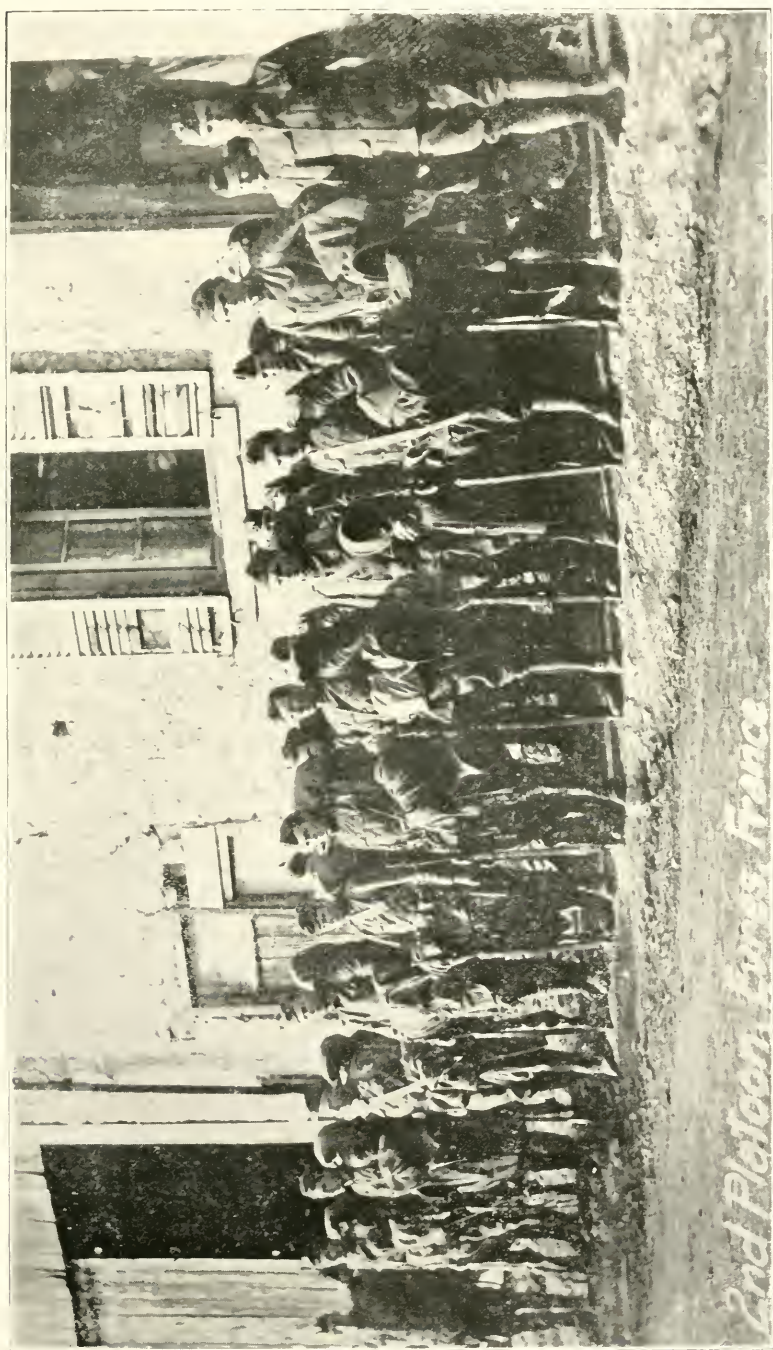
Up to this time there had been nine fatal casualties in the regiment. An imposing memorial service was held for them. Chaplain Clarke officiated. The regimental band rendered fitting music for the occasion.

Master Engineer Bodie was again assigned to the company. He had been away from "F" company for six months. We had heard much about leave areas and furloughs but no one ever dreamed that anything like that could happen to anyone in our outfit. But one day we were all given a big surprise. Nine men were called on the carpet and were given seven-day passes, and the remainder of the company were led to suspect that more leaves were to be granted. The priority list was to be made on a basis of individual efficiency. Everyone now had something to strive for.

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.



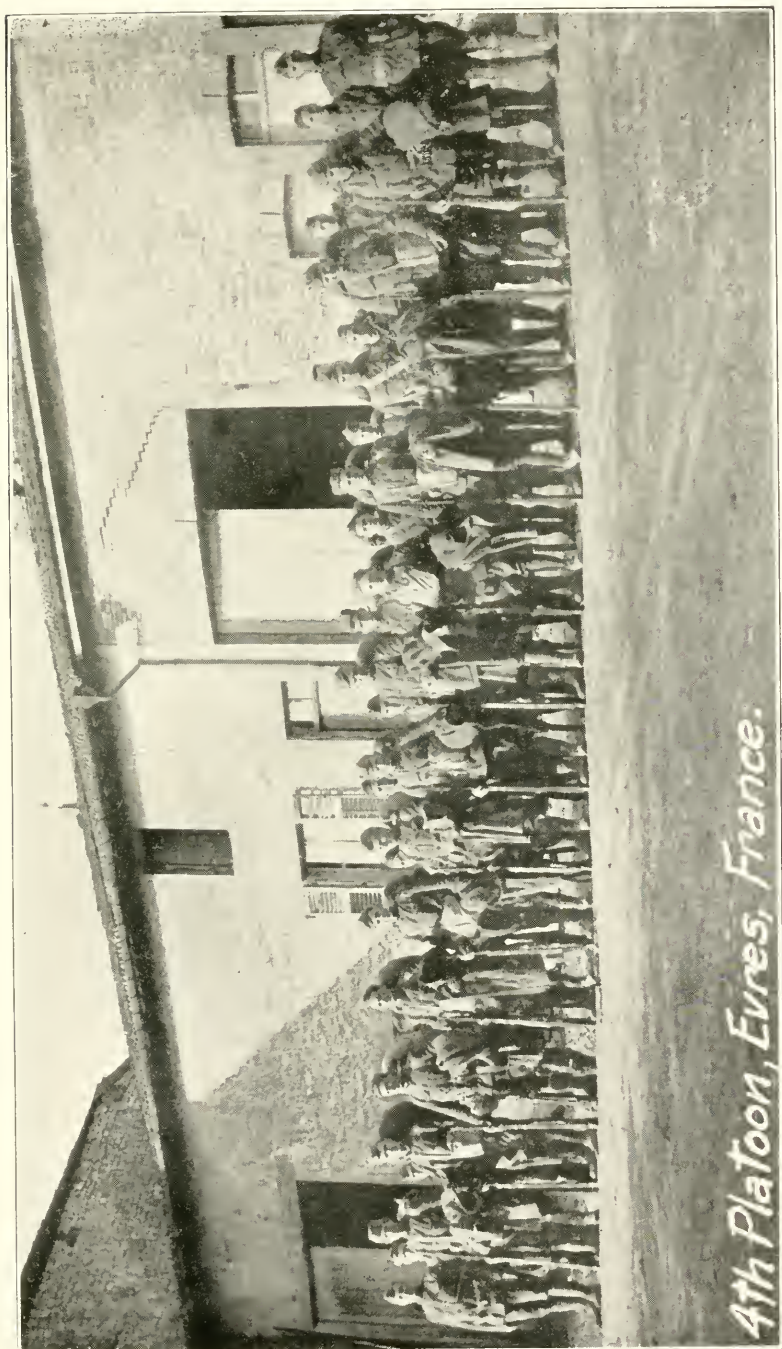
A REST



COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.



A REST



4th Platoon, Evres, France.

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

Every night German planes flew over the town trying to get a pot-shot at the near-by aerodrome. Searchlights probed the darkness in every direction, and the roar of aircraft guns was continuous from dusk till dawn. Observation planes came over daily and these were always greeted with heavy fire from our ever-alert gunners. After a week in Evres the company boarded motor trucks and went forward. We boarded the trucks at 9:00 A.M., and arrived at Le Claon at about 1:00 P.M. Enroute the drivers made a one half hour stop for chow. "Chow" it was, for the drivers were all Chinese and their meal consisted of rice and then more rice. A Chinaman is said to make a fine washwoman, and, for those who can stand it, they say he makes a very good cook, but as a chauffeur he just isn't. Any time you want a thrill just take your Ford down to the local Washee emporium and ask Hip Lung Sing to take you out for a ride. The Bureau of War Risk Insurance has since placed a ban on the moving of troops by Chink driven camions.

With a sigh of relief and a prayer for our deliverance we set foot on terra firma at Le Claon, then started a two mile hike up the hill to the Argonne forest. We remained here for three days. We did a little I. D. R., and some Target Practice and spent the odd hours preparing for action.

At about 9:00 A.M., on the morning of October 28th the Company fell in and left Camp Monhoven for our usual destination "Somewhere in France". The morning was clear and the air bracing, just the morning for a walk. After traveling a few kilos we came upon scenes of recent fighting. The woods, we were now in the heart

A REST

of the Argonne forest, were very dense and shells had shattered the tree trunks leaving splintered stubs testifying to the destructive power of German H. E., and shrapnel. The stubs became more frequent and finally we emerged upon a belt of utter devastation. Here no



CAMPED IN THE ARGONNE FOREST

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trees were left standing and shell hole lapped shell hole for a distance of nearly a mile. Here was the line where the French had stopped the German advance and where each side had stubbornly held for four years. Belt after belt of barbed wire lay on each side and trench after trench testified to the intensity of the fighting. It was an awe inspiring sight and one apt to impress a company on its way to the line. It was here that the American advance had started on September 26th and from the



AN UNDERGROUND ORDERLY ROOM

number of the machine gun nests and Yankee graves passed on the rest of the trip, we knew that Germany had collected heavy toll for the land wrested from her. From this belt on we passed many camp sites and bungalows hidden in the woods and now occupied by American army P.C.'s., but formerly harbouring German Headquarters. The signs along the road were all written in German and we felt that we were in Germany for sure.

A REST

At noon we lined up for lunch and received a delicious bully beef sandwich and a rest. Between the two we were much refreshed and soon resumed our march. Finally we caught glimpses of the Artillery Balloons and we knew we were drawing near our destination. We came out of the woods, descending a steep hill, passed a camp hospital and came out into a beautiful valley. After a few more hours we were told to establish camp on a hillside about two kilos outside of Fleville. We had



WATCHING THE "BIRDIE"

covered about fifteen miles of hard marching and we were not very much elated over the prospect of digging in on such a steep hill, but by this time we knew what was safest so we were not long in establishing ourselves.

Our kitchen, which had by this time arrived, was soon in operation and about 7:00 P.M., we lined up for mess consisting of well seasoned tomato soup. As we started eating we began to think that it was too well

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seasoned, but when our eyes began to smart and we started to sneeze and kept on sneezing we couldn't decide whether the cooks were serving us a little tomato soup with our pepper or whether some wag had put cow itch on the bread, but the gas alarm soon settled the mystery for us, and we then knew that it was a little seasoning from Fritz that we were experiencing. Gas masks were soon in position except that a few who had carelessly forgotten theirs had to return to the tents for them. There we sat with our soup in our mess kits and no way to get at it, for the drill masters had never shown us any way of eating tomato soup with the mask in place. The gas soon cleared and we proceeded with our evening meal. For three days we lived in pup tents on the hill side well dug in. Working parties went out sorting lumber, fabricating bridge parts and transporting bridge material to Sommerence. Our nights were interrupted by frequent gas alarms as the Boche was trying to get the batteries that were on our right and left on the hill side. If noise was any indication those batteries must have been very troublesome to our enemy. The night of October 31st we were told that we would break camp and move forward at 3:30 the next morning. A detail was in Sommerence all that night guarding bridge material, etc., to be used in the next day's work.

BACK TO THE ARGONNE.

THERE was no need of bugle or whistle at 3:30 on the morning of November 1st in that section of France for at that moment the earth began to rock and the skies were vivid with the flash of guns that started the bombardment preparatory to the advance which was to start at 5:30 A.M. The company formed without commands as none could be heard, and started up toward the scene of the racket. Shortly after passing Fleville we were halted and turned out of the road and continued our way single file through the fields, as the roads were being swept with our guns. Soon we were among the 75's and here it was every man for himself, wandering in and out as he saw best and safest. Jerry was wide awake by this time and was hitting pretty heavy with gas shells causing us to "Snap into" our gas masks every few moments. The flash of heavy guns was blinding and the roar deafening. Finally we got through and formed again on the road. Here we were greeted with the sharper whistle of Machine Gun bullets traveling in both directions. Somehow we out-manuevered this new difficulty and came through with but one man hit. This was Private Harvey Webb who was struck in the abdomen. He was taken to the first aid station then established in Sommerence and evacuated to a field hospital in the rear. From last reports Private Webb had returned to the United States fully recovered from his wounds.

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

At Sommerence the Company was halted and here we established a dump for our blanket rolls. The detail that had been on guard all night over the trucks of bridge material here reported an exciting night and as evidence showed us a truck that had received a direct hit. Luckily no one was injured.

At 5:30 A.M., the Infantry started to follow the barrage that was laid on the German lines a few hundred yards ahead. They advanced in extended order. After



A FRENCH "75" CREW

them came the second wave in squad column. We were on the 2nd Division sector and it was our first glimpse of the much advertised Marines in action. We tried to follow the second wave but the first truck was stranded in a shell hole. This held up our train. A platoon had previously been assigned to each truck to overcome such difficulties and the boys hopped to dislodging the stalled truck knowing that the bridges would be needed to keep

BACK TO THE ARGONNE

the artillery and ammunition going forward. We were at our task only a few moments when the drone of a German plane was heard aloft. The plane circled calmly above us. This was a signal for renewed efforts on our part as we knew it would not be long before it would send back word as to our whereabouts. We were not mistaken for it was only a few minutes when things started fast and furious for us. Shell after shell dropped in our immediate vicinity. Knowing our location was no longer a secret to the Germans we started our trucks over the hill but were halted at the crest owing to the intensity of the fire at this point. The road here was under direct observation. A detail was left to act as guard and loading detail for the trucks at Sommerence. This detail suffered the next casualties of the drive. A shell lighting right at our packs instantly killed Private James R. Smith and severely wounded Corporal Ralph E. Fraker. Corporal Fraker was taken to the dressing station and thence to a hospital where he died three days later.

Immediately following the second wave two mine locating details, or as we called them, Dynamite gangs, were sent out to clear the roads, bridges, and fields of any traps Jerry might have left for our entertainment. These details were under Lieut. Menke and Sergeant Baxter.

The shelling continued on the hills immediately ahead of the trucks but we felt that enough time had been lost and determined to run the gauntlet. So the trucks were started again and up and over the crest we went. We had not progressed very far however before we had to abandon the trucks and take cover in shell holes.

Such cover was very plentiful here. After a wait of ten or fifteen minutes the shells seemed to come less frequently and we forged ahead. A report came back that the bridges at St. George's and Immeecourt were still intact so we established a dump of the bridge material just beyond St. George's and set to work on the roads. The road at St. George's was in terrible condition owing to the heavy shelling from both sides and it was well after dinner before we had it in any kind of shape, though the light 75's and ammunition wagons were kept moving over it all day. At about 4:00 P.M., we dropped back toward Sommerence to a small stream and started to construct a box culvert there as the wagons had worked the roads to too bad a condition for fording. Before we had it completed we were driven away by heavy shell fire and returned to the place where the Marines had jumped off early that morning. Here we established headquarters and prepared to spend the night in the fox holes occupied by the outposts of the Marines on the previous night. A detail went up that evening and completed the culvert.

During the greater part of the day we had been exposed to very heavy shelling and while we were very lucky we did not escape without a few casualties for Privates Burchill, Zanotto, Malone, and Danilevsky, and Corporal Fabina had been wounded by flying shell splinters and evacuated to the rear. Burchill and Danilevsky returned to us about six weeks later but Zanotto, Malone, and Corporal Fabina did not rejoin the company when they recovered.

No report was received from the Dynamite gang that night, but they had had their share of excitement.

BACK TO THE ARGONNE

Corporal Brigman was wounded by shrapnel and taken back. In its advance the Infantry had divided at a rise in the ground, thereby leaving a V-shaped knoll untaken. At this point a platoon of Germans with Machine Guns surprised our party. The boys took cover at the road side and started shooting. Nine Germans were killed before a German Machine Gunner could get to the road. In this skirmish Sergeant Carthew was shot through the heart and instantly killed. When the German Gun was placed on the road our men were left without protection and fled to a safer position. Private Hatfield was busy picking off any Jerry who popped up and he missed the queue to beat it. He was taken prisoner. A few minutes later Lieut. Menke sent up a platoon of Blue Ridge doughboys and in another few minutes that Boche gang were asking Saint Pete if they might be attached for quarters and rations. Private Hatfield was taken back to an officer. They handled him pretty roughly. The Germans stripped him of his equipment, but he appealed to the officer to be allowed to keep his gas mask and helmet, and this was granted him. The officer questioned him as to our strength and Hatfield told him that we had nine divisions in that sector. He was turned over to a wounded man, one with a broken arm, who was ordered to take the prisoner to the rear. After traveling quite a distance Hatfield decided that he would have a smoke, so he lit a cigarette. The Boche asked for one and was given it. While he was getting a light Hatfield got the brightest idea that ever entered his mind. Fritz was stooped over so he clouted him. It was a full swing that landed just right and the German went down for the count. Hatfield then finished

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him with his hob nails and took refuge in a shell hole at a safe distance from the encounter. Under cover of darkness he moved as close to our lines as was prudent and waited for daylight. He then put up his helmet and waited until the doughboys came up for him. He returned that day to the company and he was greeted as one restored from the grave. That night the dynamite gang reported by runner that all was well. The same evening the report reached us that the Germans were fleeing by railroad and that our advance men were giving chase in motor trucks.

The morning of November 2nd we were awakened with the glad tidings that the cooks had brought us up some G. I. cans filled with hot coffee and rice. Having spent the past twenty four hours on Bully and Hard Tack it was not long until we were eagerly awaiting our turn to be fed. After breakfast we went to work on the roads again. There was practically no shelling all day and from the news brought back by the wounded and prisoners we knew that the Germans were too busy saving their guns to turn them around for a shot. After passing St. George's the roads were in bad condition and our main job was to drain them and scrape the mud from the surface. The weather changed, or rather came back to its old form, and there was a mean drizzle all day. That night we dug in on a little embankment just outside of Immeecourt. The clay was wet and sticky and would stick to our shovels and boots making the task anything but agreeable after a hard day's work on the road. However, we dug in and pitched our pup tents. The kitchen joined us here and we had another hot meal. It was nearly a banquet as we had butter, and sugar in

BACK TO THE ARGONNE

our coffee. As it grew darker the sky ahead of us became a glowing red. The Germans were firing Buzancy preparatory to withdrawing from that town.

After a night's rest we broke camp again and marched through Inneecourt to Buzancy where headquarters were established in a large barn. The day was spent in cleaning up the roads through the town. The weather had cleared and we were spectators to several thrilling air battles. We were also driven to cover several times by the Machine Guns from German planes. But it was another day free from shelling for which we were all thankful. That evening we received rumors of the abdication of the Kaiser and of armistice overtures. These were received with scepticism but we knew that if things kept going as they had been for the last few days that that would surely happen or else we would land in Berlin.

The roads, with the aid of an all day sun, were in fair condition so we pushed ahead on the next morning in an endeavor to catch up with the Infantry but were held up at the forks of the Harriecourt-Sommamthe road just outside of Vaux by shell fire. Here we established camp and had dinner. The company returned to the road and worked from the forks back toward Buzancy. Jerry was handier to us than we thought and soon began to land whizz-bangs right and left. The road was full of trucks and artillery at this point and so they unhitched their horses, running them down through our camp in search for cover. The shelling still confined itself to the roads some two hundred yards from our location so the cooks calmly proceeded in preparations for supper. But Jerry soon began lengthening his range and the shells soon began to fall in camp. This

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was a signal for evacuation and we "Retired" down into a deep valley where we were comparatively safe. Horses were running loose and several casualties occurred along the road and on the hill side. In endeavoring to get our horses to a place of safety Private Joseph Collins was struck with a piece of shell which penetrated his heart killing him instantly, Horse-shoer Yuchnow was seriously wounded and carried to the rear. Wagoner Dishong also received a slight flesh wound. Between "shell storms" we tried to move our equipment from the danger zone, but were unable to do much until our artillery had silenced the offending battery late in the afternoon. In one of these attempts Pvt. Suskey received a small wound in the hand from a shell splinter. Both Suskey and Dishong remained with the company.

We dug in for the night on the side of the hill. It was not very long after we were tucked away in our blankets that we heard the unmistakable throbbing of a Boche plane overhead. He seemed to be very low, so we lay breathlessly waiting for what we knew was sure to happen. Presently there was an explosion down near Buzaney and we knew that the night's work had begun. Explosion followed explosion in rapid succession as if the operator had dropped the tail-gate and let his whole load fall. We lay listening as he flew back over our camp. He returned with another load and then with another. Each load was dropped beyond us but we lay wondering if he was going to reserve one for us on one of his trips back. After the third trip we went to sleep and were not disturbed again that night.

On November 5th we marched to Sommauthe and occupied billets deserted by the Germans on the previous

BACK TO THE ARGONNE

day. There were good stoves, pianos, some cushion furniture and other reminders of civilian life here. There was also an abundance of souvenirs for any who cared to be bothered with them. The company had plenty to do as the roads in this section were badly in need of attention, so we did not get much time for scouting around. That night our division was relieved but the engineers were placed on detached service with the Corps so we remained on the job after the doughboys and artillery had gone back to rest. Word was sent to Beaumont for the Dynamite gang to rejoin the company so they came back the next morning.

The activities of the mine-searching parties from the beginning of the drive are well worthy of mention as they defeated several well layed German schemes. On November 2nd Sergeant Baxter's party located a buried mine in a field near Verpel. It consisted of ten six-inch shells layed at ten yard intervals and all cross-connected with trip wires. This plant was disconnected and rendered harmless. On November 3rd Lieut. Menke's party located and removed a mine placed under the bridge in the main road leading out of Buzancy. There were eighteen six-inch shells primed and connected, and four hundred pounds of dynamite in this little nest. On the morning of November 4th Baxter and the Lieutenant with eight men arrived in Beaumont. They were the first Americans to reach the town.

The Germans had a few machine gunners in Beaumont but the main body of them had fled. The French fed our boys well, kissed them effusively and gave them as royal a welcome as a shot up, war stricken community could. That night the boys slept, but the Lieutenant

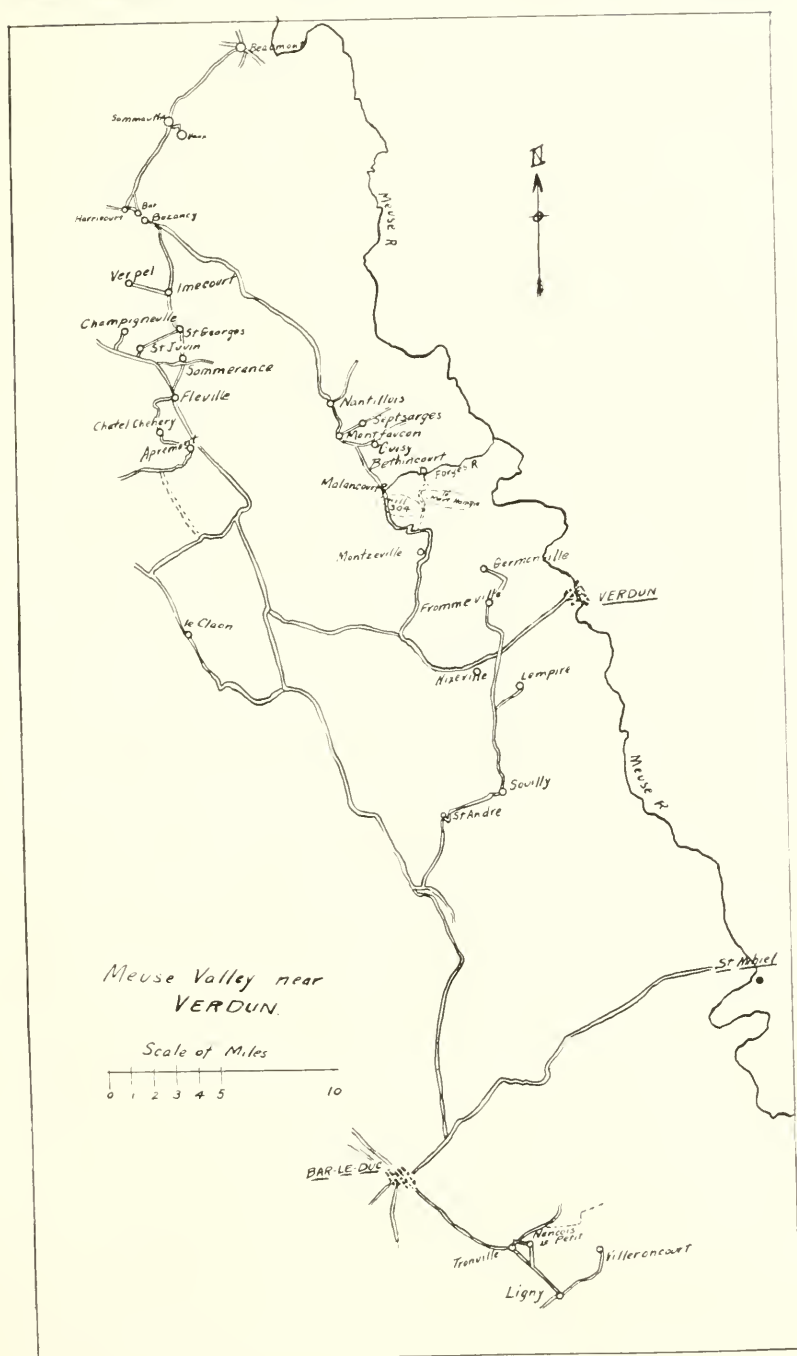
COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

kept watch. The next morning four men went out, and returned at about 2:00 P.M. At 7:00 P.M., the detail was ordered to rejoin the company at Sommanthe.

The company remained stationed at Sommanthe until the morning of the 11th. During our stay the weather was bad and the roads demanded attention night and day. As a result of the bad weather and of our precautions to keep our lights screened we had no interference from the German fliers. Every night they came over and we received reports of their activities behind us. We were free from shell fire except that every evening at mess time two shells, never more, never less, would light somewhere in town as a gentle reminder that we were still within reach. These apparently came from over the river, and all the damage they did was to knock a few more holes in a town that was already full of them.

We built several kilos of corduroy roads. The roads were so soft that we had to use caterpillar tractors to haul the heavy trucks through. In Sommanthe we saw many sad sights. Refugees just liberated after four years under the German yoke came ploughing through the mud. Women with children in their arms, aged men and women pushing carts piled high with household goods, little burros pulling immense carts heaped to overflowing, all came struggling out of Beaumont. Soldiers returning from the lines carried boxes and bundles or helped the aged on their weary way. The young women told tales of German outrage and brutality and their appearance gave ample support to their stories. But all had an eager look, prompted by the longing to rejoin the happy ties that had been severed when the war first descended upon them.

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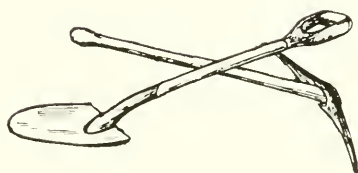
At 6:00 A.M. November 11th we turned out and marched back to Le Mort Homme. The distance was about twelve miles. The route lay through Vaux and Buzancy. The roads were crowded with artillery and motor trucks headed forward so most of our marching was done in Indian file. Of course our thoughts and conversation were mostly on the rumored armistice. But as we could still hear the roar of guns we doubted that anything could stop them. Finally the distant booming ceased, but we didn't know whether it was a lull in the proceedings or whether we had marched beyond the range of the noise.

We had left the field with two men unaccounted for. These were Privates Frederick Clarke and Angelo Molinaro. These men were missed on November 6th. Later we received word that they had been wounded and taken to the rear. As no one was with them we do not know the extent of their injuries further than that they were not returned to the organization when they had recovered.

The night of the 11th was one such as none of us had ever experienced. The armistice rumors were unconfirmed and everyone was in a state of suspense. It grew quite chilly and someone sought permission to build a fire. The C. O., said "Burn anything you see" so we went to it. This was our Official Announcement that the news was true. The band struck up a lot of old Home Melodies that carried the fellows right back home. It was hard to say whether we were saddened or cheered by the music. The news that fires were permitted spread rapidly and in a few minutes Le Mort Homme was ablaze. Squads vied with each other to see which could build the

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biggest fire. Few went to sleep for the entire hill was charged with the spirit of revelry and celebration.



CHEATING A RAILROAD.

AT six on the morning of the twelfth the company rolled up its packs once more and started. Where we were going now was a question. Heretofore we were either going toward or away from the front. But now the war was over, so rumors ran, and our thoughts began to turn toward Hoboken. So we were in fine spirits that cool November morning as we marched back through the shell torn fields and ruined villages where not so many days ago the now vanquished foe had desperately struggled to maintain his hold. The weather was fair but the roads were covered with a thin sheet of slippery mud that made walking difficult. Where the surface was gone the roads were almost impassible and we made many detours through the fields. Our route lay through Beffu, Champigneulles, St. Juvin, Marcq, and Cornay, all hardly more than stone piles, so heavy had been the bombardment. About 1:00 P.M., we reached Chatel Chehery where we went into billets for the night.

The next day was a repetition of the day previous except that we soon came on familiar ground again for we had re-entered the Argonne and were on the road we traversed on our way up to the last big show. However it did not impress us in the same way this time for we knew that no matter how fierce the fighting had been there it was all over now. After ten miles of hard marching through muddy roads we finally arrived at Camp Monhoven again and pitched our pup-tents over the same holes we had dug some weeks previous.

CHEATING A RAILROAD

Here we spent five days resting and waiting for orders. Would we be placed in the Army of Occupation or would we go home "Toot Sweet"? This was the question of the hour. At night we had celebrations that would shame Coney Island on the fourth of July. We discovered a lot of French rockets and flares stored away in a dug-out and proceeded to celebrate in real American fashion. Rockets darted hither and thither through the trees and flares lit all around the tents until a fellow began to think that war wasn't so dangerous after all as compared with Young America on the rampage.

A second lot of men were granted passes to leave areas. They were seven-day passes so we told them as they left that we would probably meet them at the port. We didn't. The Regimental Band and Minstrels gave us an entertainment on Sunday.

November 18th saw us packed up and on the move again. There was a rail-head nearby. Rumor again came forward with the news that we would entrain here for Germany or the Port but Rumor was, as usual, misinformed. We marched on by the rail-head without a moment's hesitation and after twelve miles' tramp we landed in the village of Passavant. This was a town of fair size and in a very good state of preservation as the Germans had disturbed it only from the air and but a few times. However we were all too tired to take in the sights, and as marching orders were in for the next day, we hit the floor as soon after supper as was possible.

Twelve more miles of hiking the following day found us in the village of Sommilles. There was another mythical rail-head located here. Again the railroad was to

come to its own and we were to entrain. Some real imaginative genius went so far as to have us turn in our transport here, but alas, bright and early the next morning we again shouldered our packs and headed south with our complaining feet still marked "Duty". By noon we reached the village of a fair size for that part of France and though our orders called for an additional three miles for that day it was decided to billet here, so we stayed. The billets were rather poor but even the soft spots of a stone floor felt good to us then. There were several Cafe signs in evidence so we spent the remainder of the day trying to keep ahead of the officer who was closing the wine shops up. Here we had a day of rest and were also treated to a bath in an old bath house discovered near a small stream. It was a real French military bath consisting of a half inch pipe with a little brass sprinkler head placed about every two feet on it. These little sprinklers let out five gentle streams except when clogged and then the number varies. The water was carried from the creek and placed in a barrel. From the barrel the water was pumped to a small tank overhead, from there it circulated through a coil in a heater and up to the sprinkler pipe. This is not a very satisfactory arrangement but has its advantages over an old bacon can. This type of bath house was in general use throughout the American and French armies and when properly attended, could moisten about twenty soldiers per hour.

The rest was good but the next day the real siege started. Woe to the man who could not walk, for the ambulance was so laden with souvenirs that the one patient assigned to ride in it could not find enough room

CHEATING A RAILROAD

to lie down and he found that laying on helmet spikes and miscellaneous German scrap iron was little better than walking anyhow.

The band marched between the two battalions and every time we reached a village it would start playing. They wanted to make their music lively to cheer up the civilians and make them think that they were having a grand parade, but in so doing they ran their cadence up to 150 or thereabouts and we sure had to shake a leg to keep the music in step.

Our next stop was at Villers-en-Lien. It was a fourteen mile stroll. Here we were billeted in bunks, some had straw, for the night. There was plenty of good beer here and one pretty little Mademoiselle. As we marched in she stood in the doorway in the first house in town and we knew right away that we were going to like the place. By this time we had the moving habit and couldn't stay long in one place so at sun-up we again managed to get our feet tracking toward Voillecomte twelve miles in the distance.

Voillecomte was booked to entertain us during another day's rest. Here the band gave another concert. We didn't care how much jazz or speed they put in their music when they were playing it all in one place. There were two Vin Blanc parlors in town and they did a land office business. Here we spent our rest in washing transport, etc., for inspection. We surely must be going to turn in our transport and entrain. First we painted the hub nuts red and white, but they were too much like circus wagons that way so we repainted them black. As a day has only twenty four hours we hadn't time to try the rest of the proposed color schemes. After we

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got all slicked up, as if to punish us for our vanity, it started to rain. That cold damp drizzle that gave to this lovely country the poetic appellation "Sunny France" was again upon us.

Downstairs in our billet lived a little Belgian Mademoiselle, a refugee. She was engaged to some French Captain, so she told us, but was very engaging to us and tried very hard to make our stay a pleasant one. She relieved one of the K. P.'s and dished out slum in the chow line.

When we lined up on the morning of the 25th in the drizzle that was still falling no announcement was made relative to entraining or turning in our cleaned up transport. All the captain said was "SQUADS RIGHT" and we knew that old man Rumor was wrong again. France isn't a very large country on the map but try walking across it with sixty pounds of miscellaneous Q. M. C. issue on your back. Off again, on again, tramp again, was our programme. We cut off ten miles and landed in a town of wonderous size. It was Sommevoire. There were plenty of M. P.'s in sight when we went in, but they were immediately relieved. Before going they tipped the boys off concerning the stock of Cognac, etc., in the town and about where it was for sale. Everybody proceeded to oil up. Before the officers could get regulation established everyone was pretty well charged. Some of the boys hired rooms to avoid unrolling their packs. When the march was resumed in the morning, some had a hard time keeping up, for a cognac party has a funny way of putting a man out of condition. The rain made everyone miserable. The heaviest drain on our strength was just beginning.

CHEATING A RAILROAD

Sommevoire was the stop at the end of the first day, there were six of them, each worse than the others. The stops were Sommevoire, Levigny, Nuisement, Gye-sur-Seine, Rugny, and Etivey. The distances covered were Ten, twelve, twelve, eighteen, eighteen, and twenty miles respectively. On the roadside between Nuisement and Gye-sur-Seine we ate our Thanksgiving dinner. The weather was not favorable for an outdoor feast. The rain was heavy and the mud was deep. No programme was arranged to follow the outlay.

MENU (pronounced Mean-eh!)

Ragout de Cheval

Eau de Pomme de Terre

Pain—English & French.

Coffee? ?

At Gye-sur-Seine we were not permitted to cross the river and enter the live part of the town. Dad Morton was feeling naughty and decided to go over and bask in the white light and incidentally find out why the town was "Out of Bounds". The bridge was closed to soldiers so Dad tried to slip across as a submarine. Poor fish. The boys hauled him out of the Seine as soon as the splash subsided and he sputtered like a whale.

The country traversed was one of the most beautiful parts of France, Burgundy. The road ran through mile after mile of vineyards and the view from each hilltop was magnificent, but after struggling up a hill only to see another ahead of you, one was hardly in the frame of mind to enjoy scenic effects. It was a case of your left foot saying to your right, "If you pass me this time I'll pass you next". With a heavy pack on your back and a drizzle beating in your face all day you are quite apt to let French landscape go unappre-

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ciated. At night we would try to find a fire to dry our clothes and a light to "Read our Shirts" by. The chow consisted of travel rations and travel rations are very unsatisfactory as such. A few eggs or a rabbit in the evening, cooked by some French woman, was more to our liking. Many such feasts were enjoyed by the crowd in the numerous French homes where we chanced to be billeted. The people as a rule were very good to us and hearty in their welcome. It would have been a wonderful trip in a Limousine.

The company settled in Etivey for a rest. During the five days we stayed there we had two close order drills, battalion inspection, and a thorough cleaning up of equipment and transport. Doggy Zinsser opened his shop and did a rushing business. All along the way shoes had been going to the bad and he had been making repairs at every stop. New shoes could not be had and the men had in many cases ruined the old ones by cutting them to relieve their tired and aching trillbies. At Etivey every one was comfortable and we were soon in shape to start again. Every one had thought that when the hike was finished we would pile on to a boat, but to err is human. And our thoughts were badly in error. On the morning of December 4th we fell out and hiked though mud and rain to Chassignelles. Here we located at Truchy Farm. It was not a very attractive billet but before we left it we fixed it up to our liking.



CHASSIGNELLES.

TRUCHY Farm was a square barnyard with farm buildings on two sides, a one and-a-half story dwelling on the third, and the fourth closed with a high stone wall with central gates. The buildings were all in good repair and all had good tile roofs. The yard had several manure piles and a miscellaneous cluttering of old farm wagons and equipment in it. We started cleaning up. The owners were persuaded to remove the manure. It is a rash and trouble provoking stunt to interfere with a Frenchman's manure pile. By its size and odor the owner's financial status is estimated. Old man Truchy was pretty rich. The carts and wagons were removed and loads of cinders were hauled in to resurface the area. Our wagons and limbers were neatly parked, and the place was so much improved that it could hardly be identified as the old farm-yard. In the stables mangers were built, stoves were placed in all the buildings, and four-man double-decker bunks were put in all the billets. It was a fine place when we got it fixed.

We were about two hundred yards from the edge of the town. Chassignelles consisted of one long street running from the canal to the gate of Truchy Farm. From this the small side streets branched. Each side street connected with a macadam road leading to a nearby town. The towns so connected were Fulvy, Ancy-le-Franc and Raviers. In the middle of the town stood the Mairie. The Maririe housed the school, the town coun-

cil chamber, and the residence of the Mayor. The building sat back from the street leaving an open square. This space was used by our band for its semi-occasional concerts. Here also the buglers lined up when we stood Battalion Retreat. The football team worked out its plays and ran signals here and on one occasion an itinerant Frog show stopped and pulled off a "Cinema" performance. It was a much used piece of ground. When not otherwise occupied Hugh Bell took the 2nd Battalion runners out on it and gave them a little close order drill. Passers-by always stopped to watch them. The runners always had the sympathy of anyone who stopped to watch them drill, for Bell always handled them so rough. The town had two bakeries, a butcher shop and enough Estaminets to keep all who felt so inclined well illuminated.

Regimental Headquarters was at Fulvy. A company runner rode over on horse back twice every day carrying reports and returning with mail, sometimes. Division Headquarters was at Ancy-le-Franc. Ancy was not a very live place. It had too many officials per square foot to suit most of us. There were a few pretty good souvenir stores there but that is about all. Ancy had a Chateau that had a very interesting collection of old ordnance and a very attractive interior but from the outside there was nothing about it but its size to attract the attention. The caretaker of the chateau had a long tale about the importance of the owners and the class that blossomed from their family tree but we were never very much impressed with this part of the story. Our principle reason for going to Ancy was to buy cigars and candy at the Divisional Commissary.

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The principle points of interest in Chassignelles were the cafes. These were the most important buildings in the town. The most notorious of these was the *Rendez-vous des Marines*. It was popularly known as the "White Horse". The White Horse specialized in a brand of liquid barb-wire that led many an unwary soldier to the pokey. The place was run by an old lady that was not easy to look at. She coughed and sputtered and spit, but she was very obliging and her customers overlooked her unpleasant features. She was slow of movement and not much of an asset to the establishment. Her daughter, Charlotte, was very much on the job. When the shop was open she showed amazing speed at filling orders. Here came the fellow with the grouch to tell his troubles. Charlotte knew just what was good for insomnia, ennui, fever, grip, flu or anything else. She always prescribed white-horse. The fact that the White Horse was at one edge of the town, and our billets were beyond the opposite edge did not seem to bother her trade any. Customers had to pass about four other wine-shops on the way, but that made no difference. Charlotte was a sport. She did not lose interest in her customers when their franes were all gone, but ran generous charge accounts. She also made cash loans to the unfortunate who needed them and had the Irish-American stunt of treating "on the house".

The Boar's Nest was not a regular cafe. It was private. Anybody in the Second Battalion could consider himself a friend of the family and go in and make himself at home. Wagoners, stable sergeants and chevaux orderlies were especially welcome as they carried an air with them that was pleasing to the ladies.

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The ladies were Wire Haired Liz and Big Sue. No one ever heard any sober man saying anything flattering about either of them. The average French peasant girl is not much to look at in her field clothes, but there is usually something about her that makes you feel that a few nifty clothes properly hung on would make her look like an American porch-wren. But not so with Liz and Sue. If they had any beauty it was in their souls. They had a couple of dirty tied-together kids that ran errands. The kids were always very much on hand. They ran a blind tiger with no stock. The gang would go in, pool their frames, and send one of the kids out for the wet goods. No one ever suspected the operation of any but the regular wine shops, so Liz and Sue got their slice of Velvet even when all the estaminets were closed to Americans. As stated above, neither Liz nor Sue were attractive, but as the evenings grew late and the guests' powers of perception became dimmed, a certain charm enveloped the girls and they were the objects of gallantry and attention that would flatter a Parisian belle.

The Cafe Bourgonne was the most orderly place in town. It was "Emmie's" to all the boys. Emmie did not "compree" cognac unless you were a regular customer, and any other strong drink was "finish".

The orderliness of the establishment was not a matter of strict management nor of high class patronage. It was merely a matter of location. This was the most prominent corner and the chance of getting away with any rough stuff was not so good as at the other joints. Emmie had many admirers. Wiggle was one of the most ardent of these. Emmie's mother ran a little curi-

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osity shop at the entrance to the cafe. She didn't sell anything that we could use except post cards, so she didn't get as many francs as Emmie did.

The Cafe Francaise had a little grocery pigeon hole where only one customer could stand at a time, but the wine shop could seat a hundred without crowding. Upstairs the football team had its quarters. They held meetings at night and did not observe the 8:00 o'clock closing order. The charmer of this joint was Marie. During our stay she received forty-seven boxes of candy in token of the appreciation of her many customers and admirers. There was method in this bar-maid sparking. If you stood in good you could get cognac and benedictine and occasionally a little shot of rum, but if you were just a *soldat ordinaire* you could buy nothing but Vin Blanc and Vin Rouge.

Some of the non-coms sought privacy for their parties so they established exclusive places for getting together. The principle places of this sort were Madame Saloni's and Madame Bully's. Madame Saloni ran a sort of Sergeants Mess. The boys would go down about six P.M., eat supper at five francs per, and spend the evening parley-voo-ing with the madame's daughters, Germain and Madelaine. The top-kicker and Sgt. Todd were strong for Madelaine. Sgts. Joe and Carter were ready to draw any minute in defense of the beautiful Germain. M. E. Bodie was willing to accept the notice of either of them but he never had a show. It was at one of these sessions that Bodie was invited outside and decorated. Madame Saloni put up a good feed, and could procure vintages which no cafe keeper in town would sell to American soldiers. She and her family

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were refined people, so no one ever got boisterous while in her house. Every evening an old woman, known to the soldiers as Dirty Kate, dropped in to see Madame Saloni. Sgt. Fleckenstein gets credit for having kissed her, but anyone who ever saw her plowing or hauling manure would doubt it. For though Flecker is reckless, it is hard to believe that he ever did anything as reckless as that. It was at Madame Saloni's that Sgt. Carter uttered those immemorable words "Bon Ami pour Vous". This statement is denied by some, but they are just letting Carter down easy.

A couple of Master Engineers had a room at the home of one Madame Bully. Madame Bully was broad minded and indulgent. She would put nothing in the way of the poor American boys, far away from home, when they wanted to have a good time. After the wine shops were closed to soldiers for the night she would go out and get anything that was needed. Some of the parties at this quiet little home were rather wild and wooley. The madame was always well paid for any damage done to her property, so she was satisfied. One evening a big, dusty, moth-eaten stuffed heron offended one of those present. What could be done? A mangey old Jo-Jo bird could not be allowed to stare down and gum an otherwise happy party. So it was pulled down and torn apart. The question among those who knew about it was "Who breezied 'Erin'?". Anyone wanting a pass never dared mention the heron around the orderly room. One of the ornaments at Madame Bully's was a large wax plant with rectangular berries and leaves on it. This had been dubbed the "Chiclet Bush". It had a large glass dome over it and was mounted on

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a pedestal. When anyone came in, one of the boys would lift the dome and offer the visitor a chiclet. The chiclet bush soon had little left but the trunk and branches. One night one of the boys felt like dancing so he grabbed up pedestal, globe, chiclet bush and all and started waltzing around the room. He let his imagination carry him so far that he squeezed the globe too affectionately and it shattered in his arms and fell to the floor a total ruin. Minor accidents to furniture and building were too frequent for mention here, but the crowd was small and responsibility quickly acknowledged, so no trouble ever developed.

All through the month of December the recovered wounded were returning to the company. Every indication pointed to an early sailing. Rumor had the date set at December 28th. But the 28th came and went but we did not move.

As Christmas drew near we planned a celebration. Lieut. Furrer was placed in charge of the eats and Lieut. Ellis ran the programme. A Frog bakery was procured and pies were built from dried apples, flour, water and maybe a few other things. They tasted like regular pies too. A pig was bought and butchered under the personal direction of one of our experts. Potatoes, grapes, American cigars, and a few other trimmings completed the feast.

At last the big holiday arrived. The dinner was the big event of the day. The ration dump issued bread, onions, and canned salmon to make three Xmas meals. We used the bread. The company mess fund paid for the rest. Dinner consisted of roast pork, bread, real butter, doughnuts, apple pie, grapes, coffee, cigars, cigar-

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ettes, candy and chewing gum. The programme which followed was immensely interesting. There were twenty-four numbers. The officers all responded to calls for speeches, and there were songs by the entire company, songs by the few with talent to sing alone, recitations, dances and what not. That night large quantities of bottled Xmas cheer were consumed. The beverages ran all over the list from canal water to table vinegar.

The following week was uneventful. It just rained and rained and rained. "F" company received a district to do engineer work in. The following towns were included in our area: Pimelles, Gland, Cruzy-le-Chatel, Villon and Quincerot. Details of non-coms were sent to each of these towns to direct and expedite road repair. Later the fourth platoon was sent to Brigade Headquarters to work that district, as working parties were not available there.

New Year's was celebrated in soldierly style. At twelve o'clock a bugler blew First call. Everybody turned out under arms. Without command firing opened. A rifle barrage was dropped into Chassignelles. The streets were empty. The sentries lay in against the houses and waited for things to quiet down. The Sergeant of the guard came up and made a big fuss, but no investigation was made so he didn't have to report anybody. A bugler then blew "Cease Firing" and the reception of 1919 was considered complete.

The mess hall used by "D" company had a rough stage. Any entertainments which blew in were pulled off here. The regimental minstrels were over to see us and to let us see them twice. They announced a third

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performance but nobody showed up but the audience. A troupe of Y. M. C. A. entertainers came one evening. They were excellent performers but their show was a little bit too high-browed for the army. When the average soldier goes to a show expecting to see some slapstick stuff and on arriving hears "Flow Gently Sweet Af-ton" or "Sweet and Low", he is very apt to come out and say that the show was rotten. But an entertainment troupe is a delight even though they say or do nothing. A "Y" entertainer differs as much from a canteen worker as a shop girl at the annual picnic differs from a Quaker Miss on her way to church. By this, it is not meant that all the canteen workers were angels, but few of them had the faculty of stirring up pep among the boys. One cold night we went down to the mess hall and waited for a "Y" troupe to show up, but they were at the mercy of the P. L. M. and when they did not show up, we did not hold it against them, but rather sympathized with them, for all of us had had plenty of French Railroad experience ourselves.

The road details came in every Saturday to visit. The fourth platoon did not come in en-masse, but a few always came in to get the news, tell some news, or try to squeeze a few pairs of socks from the Froggy. Sgt. Cicchetti was all fixed up at his station so he called on us rarely. He was living with the family that owned the platoon billets, and, being in charge, was received with proper grace by the French people. He stood ace high with the ladies and was so busy with them during his leisure hours that nobody knows much of his activities more than what he has told on himself. Cook Riste was also a welcome guest at the farm house but he did not follow up his advantage as did Cicchetti.

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Down at Cruzy the "*Bodie*" resided in the home of the Mayor. He had a sketching case with him and he used it. One day the officer out on road inspection saw him with the table set up on the road side. He was viewing the surrounding country with a locator's level. About two weeks later one of the boys was in his room and sighted a something hanging on the wall. It was a Stan-



THE CHURCH AT CHASSIGNELLES

ley Map. The mapist pointed to it with pride and said "Dats the Cruzy". The other men from F company billeted with A company of the 319th Infantry. They showed the dough-boys how a billet should be run. They had cooking utensils, grease, salt, pepper, etc., and broom, shovel, axe, and other little billet conveniences. Every morning the doughboys went out for reveille and

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then to breakfast. When they came back they brought breakfast for the engineers with them. The billet was then cleaned up for the day. At night if the supper was not O. K. the cooking utensils were brought out and provisions were bought for a regular meal.

At Villon, Gland, and Pimelles conditions were just as agreeable. Every man that was out on detail was well pleased with his station, and sorry to have to return to the company. The company had to keep in com-



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munication with these outlying towns and the trip around the circuit was about fifty miles, so we added a motorcycle and side car to our equipment. We then had to develop a "Speed King". This was easy. The Captain gave the gasoline goat to Corporal Schaeffer and he did the rest. The King could give you a ride that was some sensation. Mud, sleet, rain, or snow—*ça ne fait rien*—he drove through it all.

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Down at the rail-head was a regular place to be detailed. We had a platoon or more down there nearly all the time. The Pacy crew always lived on the fat of the land. The work was not always pleasant, but the jobs there had redeeming features. The ground was muddy and the season rainy. The work was mostly furnishing carrying and sorting parties for the lumber dump. Rations were unloaded here for the entire division and the detail saw to it that the regular issue was



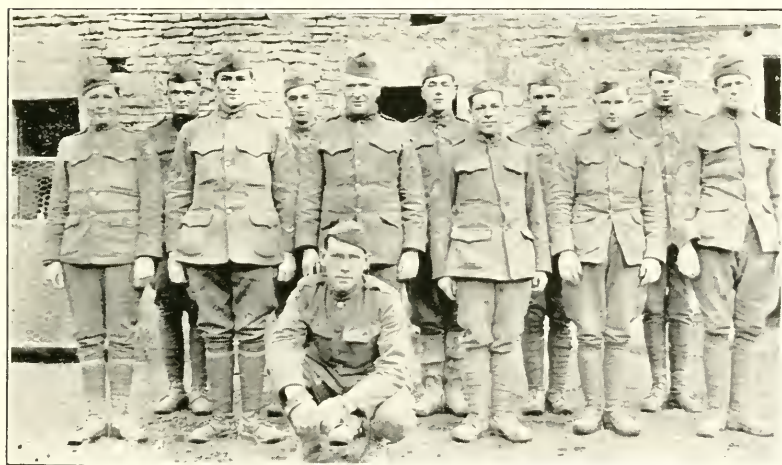
CARROT CONSUMERS

increased in both quantity and variety. We hadn't done night scouting on the front without learning a few things about it. Infantry men on guard duty were so strict that several of our boys were jugged for minor offenses. These guards were attached to us for rations, and when we saw their attitude towards us while they were on post, we limited theirchow to "RATIONS". They got

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all that they were entitled to, and there is where it stopped. We figured that this was our day for chow. Somebody else was getting it when we were forward and when we got to where the getting was good, we certainly got ours. Pancakes, Biscuit, Doughnuts, Steaks,—if it came over the P. L. M. to Pacy we got some, that's all.

Back in Chassignelles the few who remained worked on the roads in "A" Company's district. "D" and "E" Companies had gone out to their districts, so "F"



JUST MULE SKINNERS

Company fed everyone left in the 2nd Battalion. The divisional school activities started and we got our little gang of students together in the Mairie for elementary work. The advanced classes never got started as we had to move. We built a bath house down by the canal, and a hot air delousing plant beside it. Both were a complete success. The water for the showers was carried

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from the canal. Days that the bath house was running a Non Com was sent down to handle the necessary detail. One day Freddie Wolfe was in charge. He ran across to see Charlotte, Oh, many times, and so you may know that he was very cheerful. A canal boat stopped



THE CANAL BOURGONNE

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and Freddie went down to the tow-path to see who was on it. There were a couple of Mademoiselles on board, so our carefree undertaker moved up close. He stood on the bank and leaned on the gunwhale of the boat, chatting and parley-voing with the ladies. He was so interested that he did not notice that the boat was slowly moving out from the bank. But he was soon brought to full cognizance of his carelessness. Nothing but a



CHOW MONGERS, ALL

sky-hook could save him, and he didn't have any. The boat continued to move slowly out from the bank. By this time Freddie had just a toe and finger holt and he was pretty well stretched. One moment, then—SPLASH!!!! The temperature was way below freezing, but Freddie didn't know that. He burned the air in his flight of a half mile to quarters. Here he clothed himself in a blanket and organized the Hiawathian Di-

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vision. But going around with no other clothing but a blanket and a pair of old arctics soon lost its charm and the Hiawathian Division became extinct as soon as the supply Sergeant could gather some clothes for the big chief.

The Order of Skunks was founded by one Francis G. A., etc., one dark and stormy night. He decided to get members by conscription and proceeded to initiate all who came within range. One of the new members



ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

decided to reciprocate, and gave the organizer the first degree himself. This took all the fun out of the project, so the Order of Skunks lives now only in the memories of a privileged few.

The Ould Owwls was not a secret organization. Meetings were held by chance on the road between the White Horse and Trucky Farm. The Owwls had no tendency toward prohibition. It was a good gang to

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belong to for no one but an Owl could find his way home on a dark night when the Frog electric lights were feeling down-hearted. The light plant was French. A new Tungsten lamp glowed about as brilliantly as the ember of a blown out match. Sometimes the power house man would get next to himself and bring the lights up to about three fourths of full brilliancy but you could not depend upon having this condition continue for more than a few minutes. So with such a lighting system is it any wonder that an Order of Owls was organized?

Back in Hallighen, when plain grub was worth its weight in Liberty Bonds, six hungry boys out scouting for chow chanced to meet in a peasant's house where there was enough on hand to put up a dinner for the gang. They had difficulty making themselves understood, as none of them could speak any French except Froggy Harris. All he could say was "Oui! Oui!" He learned this from his mother when she used to play "This little piggy went to market" with him in the days when Froggy was young and innocent. After much motion-making they finally got the chow, and while eating they decided to organize a French club. They never had a chance to get together until we reached Chassignelles. Here the French club was resurrected, and feeds were held every few weeks. There never were any applications for membership received, as those who were members were satisfied with the size of their organization and those who were not members were satisfied with its size also.

The division sent out a bulletin in February stating that we would pass into S. O. S. jurisdiction on March 20th, and that we would leave the Ancy-Le-Franc area

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before April 1st. This caused lots of excitement. We counted days, just where we would entrain, discussed the possibilities of having to hike it, and worried about how we would be quartered in the embarkation center.

Then right in the midst of our surmises dropped an order that brought us to our senses with a snap. The second battalion was to leave in three days. We had



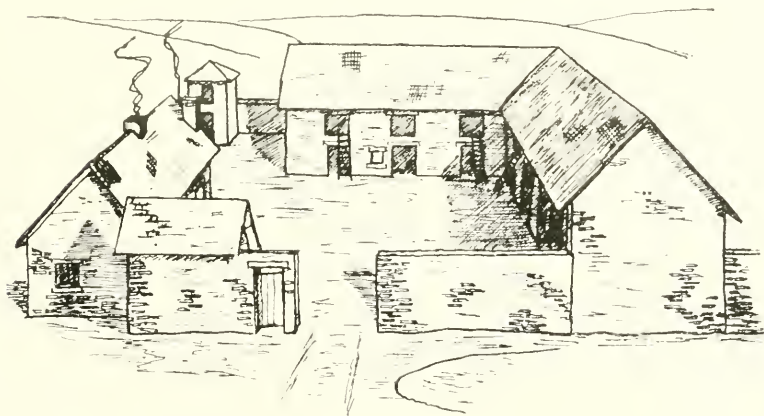
LEFT TO RIGHT: CAPT. F. G. ROCKWELL, 1st LIEUT. H. G. BUCKINGHAM,
1st LIEUT. W. T. BALLARD, 2d LIEUT. J. T. ELLIS, 1st LT. OSCAR BOHLIN

the painting of the transport well under way, and this was rushed to speedy completion. All tin hats were stenciled with the divisional insignia and then given a coat of oil. The wagons were packed, and everyone made up two packs, a heavy one strapped in the haversack which was to be hauled, and a horse-shoe roll to

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carry along. We hiked to Nuits-sur-Raviere a distance of seven kilos and there we entrained. There were Passenger coaches for three platoons and the rest of the battalion had to ride in Chevaux cars. The first platoon of "F" Company drew box cars but the rest of the company got in the coaches.

The train pulled out of Nuits at about 3:30 P. M. and acted like a regular train for about six hours. It then started French tactics. It would go four kilos and then mark time for four hours. The second night is one to be long remembered by everyone on board. From 5:00 P.M., till 10:00 A.M., we traveled about six miles. We had several "Coffee Stops" along the way, and when we finally got into the forwarding camp we had a hot feed from our own kitchens. We rested for a few hours, then started a fifteen kilo hike to the Belgian camp. It was a long round-about road. Firing on the rifle range closes the direct route so anyone hiking out while the range was working was out of luck.



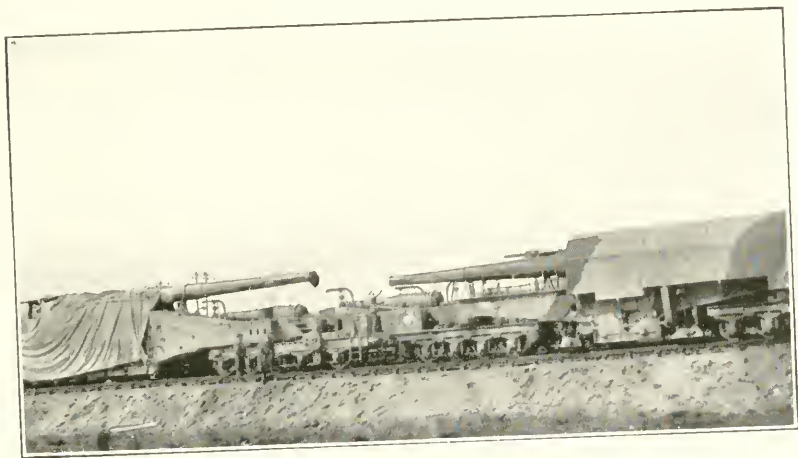
THE S. O. S.

THERE was little to do except work at the Belgian Camp. Every morning our non-coms took out several hundred dough-boys and exercised them. Road repairing, railroad building, erecting barracks and welfare huts, etc., formed the principle diversions. The carpenters were busy all the time. The new delousing plant was turned over to "F" company so we had a large force there. The plant clothing supply was at the mercy of the detail. Any man who did not get a new blouse at the delouser had no one to blame but himself. The plant was a steam and hot-air system. There were fans and boilers and pumps and heaters and flues too numerous to mention. We installed everything that was delivered to the building, but at the time we were relieved the only cooties that had met their deaths in the building were killed on the thumb-nails of their hosts. The Battalion built seven miles of narrow gauge railroad around the camp. "E" company was assigned to unload the narrow gauge cars from the standard gauge flat cars on which they were brought to camp. The small cars were ruggedly constructed and were still in serviceable condition when set on the narrow gauge tracks. The locomotives were gasoline propelled and had it not been that our "Judy" figured out the combination of them they might have been a white elephant on the hands of the A. E. F. The night that the Locomotives were put in operation all the officers in the battalion went

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on a tour of inspection. They rode over one stretch that had not been lined and the loco jumped the track. Aside from this the trip was a success both from a business and a social standpoint.

At night the boys went to movies and regimental shows at the "Y". The A. E. C. was very generous with its passes. We had been accustomed to receiving seven or eight passes at a time. Here they came to the battalion in lots of fifty to one hundred. We had our



HEAVY ARTILLERY AT LE MANS

allowable 20% away on leave all the time we were there. The mess was not so good as it should have been but we did have good barracks. About the middle of April the first battalion and Regimental Headquarters moved down to the LeMans area and settled in the Forwarding Camp. We then knew that it was just a matter of a few days until we would move down to them. We turned in all excess clothing, had company and battalion pictures

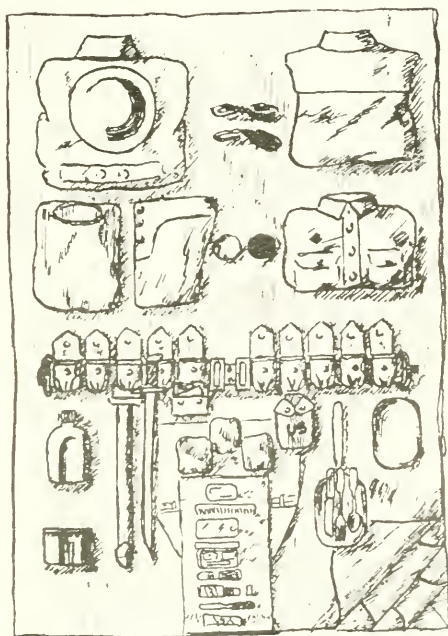
COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

taken, stood a divisional equipment inspection in the field, took a shot of "Triple T. A. B. Lipo-Vaccine", turned in the animals and transport and by this time it was Saturday April 26th. We hiked down to the Forwarding Camp and were greeted with a regular sand and dust storm. There was a good rain the next day and it brought relief from the blinding dirt clouds. We had our final field inspection and had the Castle Picture taken here. We stayed nearly two weeks. Most of the time was spent getting back into form along soldierly lines. We had East and West, Setting-up Exercises, Manual of Arms and little practice hikes. The cats were very poor and the Camp management entirely too hard boiled. The bird who was our block commander strutted around as if he could shut off the sun-light and spite the World if things didn't go to suit him. And, Oh! Girls!, he had the cutest little swagger stick.

We were slated to leave the camp five days after our arrival but we were set back for a week. There were plenty of Welfare Huts and all gave excellent service. The recreation field was filled with base-ball fans every afternoon and evening, and there was always a game in progress. While we were here the first battalion held its divisional field inspection. We went out to practice. The day was a miserable one. It was cold, the wind was high, and there was a continual downpour of rain. Our blankets were saturated but we dried them by running them through the cooty plant. The next day we stood the final A. E. C. Field Inspection. The packs were spread and lined up with strings. After the inspection each man stood behind his layout while a photograph was taken then we all moved off the field leaving the equip-

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ment lay. The packs were then photographed. It was a beautiful sight, eighteen hundred packs layed out in perfect allignment in both rank and column. This was the last inspection at Le Mans.



"DUBBIN' ON THE RIGHT"

We left for Brest on American Troop (Freight) Cars. They were eight wheel cars with springs and the train had right of way so it was a very comfortable and enjoyable trip as troop trips are rated in France. We had an evening meal served on the train. Of course it was a plain meal but it had "travel rations" beat a thousand ways. In the morning we pulled into Brest

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and had breakfast at a big mess-hall near the station. About an hour after breakfast we slung equipment and started for the Pontanezen Camp. The first part of the trip was much the same as it was on our previous hike eleven months before, but as we got out of town we began to see changes. The French kid that played "Hail, Hail the Gang's all Here" on his tin fife had enlarged his repertoire during the year and ran beside our column piping "Beautiful Katy", the road was now filled with motor transport whereas a year before it had been an empty country road, the fields at the top of the hill were now hidden by hundreds of corrugated steel buildings. The road had boardwalks at each side and there were duck-board walks everywhere. To read all the signs of warning, direction and instruction would be a liberal education in itself. We finally arrived at our billets. They were in good shape. The grounds were spotless so we knew that we were going to have to be very careful where we dropped things. The old Pontanezen Barracks were very much transformed. The parade ground had been transformed into a parking place for motor trucks. The old barrack buildings where we had slept were boarded up and every available inch of space was occupied with portable barracks, welfare buildings, or sheds of some sort.

The afternoon of the day that we arrived we were taken down for "the Brest Bath". First they looked us over for cooties and then we went into the mill. It was a large room. Over at one side stood a battery of steam delousers. In the adjoining room were the showers. It was a regular Bedlam. Any S. O. S. man in there could yell, blow his whistle or beat on a tin pan

if he wanted to, but a man in there for inspection must not talk. "You're at Ease," "Shirts Up," "Stand Up," "Turn Around," "Sit Down," "Hurry along there," "Come Back, You," "Stand Here," "Move On". That was what it would sound like if the attendants could arrange to speak one at a time, but they insisted on all talking at once and the result was as clear as the music rendered when a grind stone is played on the victrola. We endured this for nearly two minutes and were then chased into the shower room. Here we found covered troughs filled with a liquid soap that smelled strong of Kerosine. As soon as we were in, the talk started, but as there was only one mouth working we got his instructions without any difficulty. He turned on the water, then—"Open the soap boxes—don't put the soap on your heads—get the soap off—close the soap boxes—get a towel as you pass out the door to the left"—Just like that and the bath was Fini. The underwear was issued on the run. The sizes were no consideration. Sirwell drew garments that would fit Spade, and Suskey's outfit was about right for Hopkins. Two days later we had another trip through the mill. This time we went to the big building behind the bath house with full equipment and spread it on the floor while an Officer stood nearby yelling "shake it up". Then the officer strolled down past us, then another, then a third. The fourth said "Roll up, You" and the inspection was over. We then had two days practice at preparing for the final pack inspection. The order came in for us to report at 9:30 P.M. We went down with all our equipment, our packs were perfect, everyone in the regiment exactly like all the others. Our rifles were cleaned, our shoes brushed

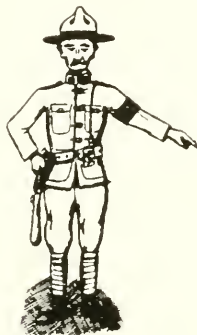
COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

and every thread of our equipment was placed just so. We went into the inspection building and had GLOVE INSPECTION. If you had a pair of gloves you were O. K.

We felt proud of the showing we had made until the next day. Then an outfit blew in from somewhere and were placed ahead of us on the sailing orders. We were peeved. Here we were all dolled up sweet enough to kiss and along comes a shaggy looking half equipped uninspected gang (we knew they were soldiers only by their mess kits) and they beat our time. Instead of climbing the gang-plank we mount guard and furnish a 100-man detail on the same day. We lay around camp for a week doing odd jobs, loafing and getting inspected. On the eighth day we were told that our boat was assigned and that we would leave on the following day. We didn't. The boat was turned over to another outfit of our Division and we just stayed. By this time many of us were thinking of applying for French citizenship papers. On the eleventh day the Engineer train pulled out leaving the rest of the regiment. On the same day we received orders to drill one hour per day. What we thought of that is not fit to print. But that evening we had our temperatures taken so we cooled down a little because the temperature reading is a sure sign of an early departure. Sure enough, the next day we packed up and hiked down to the port and gave our last names first. We were crowded on to a lighter and

THE S. O. S.

were taken out to a ship anchored in deep water in a very short while. We were not given a rest from the time we left the camp until we threw our packs on the transport bunks. Oh, what a relief!

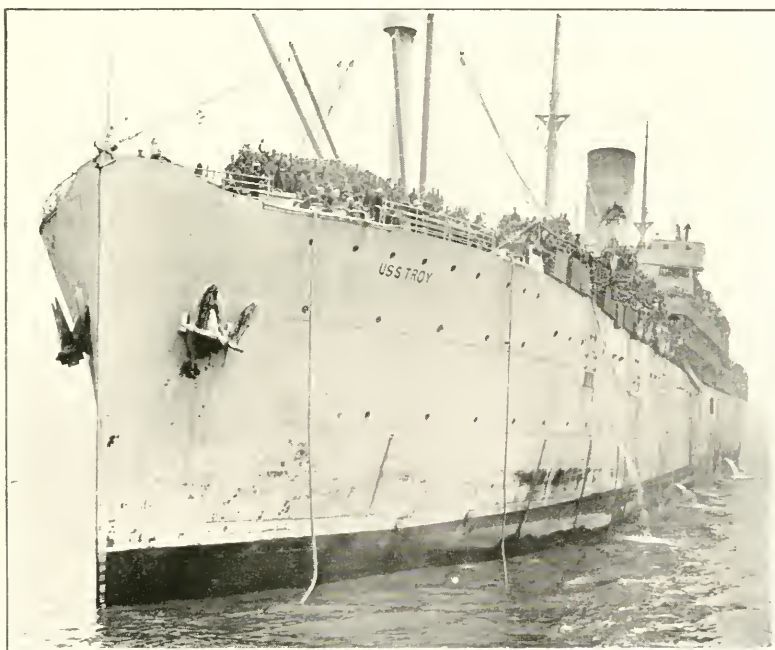


HEADED FOR THE U. S. A.

THE boat assigned to us was a converted freighter making its first trip as a transport. It had done service as a freighter under the name Minnesota but this name was later changed to TROY as the names of states were being held to name battleships. The TROY was reputed to be the biggest freighter afloat. She made the trip to Brest from New York in eleven days. We knew all these things about her before we saw her and so we came down expecting to see a big mudscow and were considerably surprised when we beheld a fine looking big boat with anchors and life rafts and smoke stack "and everything". The hold was fitted with spring-bottomed bunks in tiers of four. The steel was newly painted and the lighting was excellent. We liked our boat before we were on her more than ten minutes. The anchor was hauled up and we were under way two hours after we climbed the gang-plank. We had expected to lay in the harbor overnight at least. The evening meal was ham and cabbage and a few trimmings. This was the first ham we had eaten in a year so, summing things up, we started with everything looking rosey. The first class passenger list of our regiment was larger than the boat could accommodate so some of the officers were sent on a different boat. The second class passengers were simply out of luck for there was no provision made for them at all, so our high ranking non-coms went down in the hold with the bucks.

HEADED FOR THE U. S. A.

The Troy, was very large and heavy and was quite steady. She tossed very slightly. The troops were quartered in eight compartments, four forward and four aft. Most of "F" company was in G 6. There were six sections in each compartment. Sections 5 and 6 were on the third stage below the deck so we had state rooms located the same as old "DD" except that we were aft whereas on the way over we were forward. The eats were wonderful. After a year of corn meal, bacon, beef, potatoes, and rice with carrots thrown in occasionally as a delicacy we were surprised to find that oranges, eggs, pork, cucumbers, apples, cake, etc., were still considered fit food for soldiers.



THE U. S. S. TROY—F COMPANY IS AFT
(Courtesy of the Pittsburgh "Post")

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

The Troy should have carried a crew of eight hundred but somehow or other she landed in Brest with only six hundred "gobs" aboard. As usual the soldiers were given a chance to work and being short of help there was work for everyone that wanted it. We had forty men working in the coal-bunkers and as many more scattered all over the vessel on various duties. The coal passers ate with the crew, got a bath after each shift, and had an excuse for strolling anywhere on the ship that their fancy might lead them. The first night down in the hold Solverson collided with a lowhanging support and received two ugly cuts on the head. He spent the remainder of the voyage in the ship's infirmary. The privileges allowed the soldiers on the Troy were quite generous. On the Huron a man could get into trouble by throwing a piece of scrap paper over the side, matches and lighters were taken from us before we left Chesapeake Bay, bread was kept under lock and key, and fresh water was issued by the canteenfull between 8:00 A.M., and 9:00 A.M., daily. On the Troy lights burned all night, smoking was permitted at all hours on all parts of the ship, bread boxes were always accessible, there was plenty of fresh water and anything could be thrown overboard at any time. Every day our band or the 141st Infantry band would play and the boys would put on the gloves for a few rounds. In the evening movies were shown on the quarter deck. The soldiers perched all over the aft rigging to watch the pictures. To climb to any place as high as a hatch door was an unpardonable sin on the Huron.

As stated above the Troy was not a glutton for speed and it was a little bit disconcerting to see boats pull

HEADED FOR THE U. S. A.

up behind us, come abreast and then leave us behind all in the space of an hour. This happened several times. A three-mast sailing vessel headed for Europe passed us on our third day out. It was a real curiosity. Sailing vessels were all laying in ports when we came over so we did not see any and many of the boys had never seen one on the sea before. With the aid of the Engineer coal heavers the engineer found it possible to operate fourteen of the sixteen boilers and we soon ran our speed all the way up to twelve and a half knots. Every day a chart was posted showing the course, the position of the ship, the distance covered on each preceding day and the total distance from Brest and to Boston. There was always a crowd around the chart.

The aft galley had four long dining tables in it. These were of no use as such on a transport, but were rather in the way at meal times as they cramped the lines going to the kitchens. But after dark they became as busy as a market square. You could bet anything from a nickle up at Stud, Draw, Black Jack or the bones. The only thing it lacked was a wheel or we might refer to it as a floating Monte Carlo. When we were about half way across the mess officer saw that the space the tables took was needed badly for the chow lines so the gambling room fixtures went over the side.

The first day out overalls were issued to all enlisted men. These were a great convenience. We could squat any place without soiling our uniforms. The men who had work to do wore them of necessity but the rest of us just wore them for style. You couldn't tell a Sr. Gr. M. E. from an ordinary garden variety buck. A few non-coms from Regimental Headquarters felt a little

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

bit too holy to appear before the rest of the regiment in fatigue clothes but these celebrities will have their whims.

On Memorial Day we had a treat. Turkey and ice cream were the features. Our old friend JupPluv saw that there was a party on so he attended. He stayed from 11:45 A.M., till 12:15 P.M. Of course meal time is the proper time for rain on a transport for then all the men are on deck and cannot get below. But if everything went lovely all the time it wouldn't be the army, it would be heaven. Toward evening the wind rose and the rain made a fresh start. The boat began rolling and by dusk the sea was pretty rough. All that night and all the next day we had wind and wave to contend with. The storm lasted from Friday night until Sunday morning. It was a seventy-two mile gale. Very few men went on deck until it was over. Lieutenant Ballard went forward to see if the anchor was hanging straight or for some such reason and came back minus one Cap, Overseas. Several venturesome soldiers went up to see what a storm looks like and came back drenched. Two of the ship's life rafts were swept over the side. The following morning the wind subsided and before noon the sea was as smooth as a mirror. Early in the afternoon we received orders to land in New York instead of in Boston. This was widely rumored but our first verification of the change in course came from the loungers on the poop-deck. They had seen the change in direction of the waves in the wake of the vessel when she changed her course.

We pulled into New York harbor without further

HEADED FOR THE U. S. A.

incident. "F" company's overseas trip was at last complete.

"My country, 'tis of Thee—Sweet land of Liberty—"

(AIN'T IT A GRAND AND GLORIOUS FEELING)



DIRECTORY

FRED G. ROCKWELL	Captain	22 Huston Street, Towanda, Penna.
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‡ARTHUR N. ALLCROFT	2nd Lieut.	133 South Street, Ada, Ohio.
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‡BOWDEN, HILL C.	Corporal	Raleigh, Georgia.
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‡CLARK, HAROLD E.	Corporal	Belle Vernon, Penna.
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DEUTSCH, CRESTON S.	Private	244 Arabella St., Knoxville, Penna.
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FITZGERALD, HUNTER	Corporal	Nottoway, Va.
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FREILER, CHARLES A.	Private	32 Carbon St., Minersville, Penna.
FULTON, ARTHUR H. JR. .	Corporal	RFD No. 2, Leesburg, Va.
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GOUL, WILLIAM A.	Private	RFD No. 1, Smithton, Penna.
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HARRIS, PAUL H.Sup. Sgt.	603 S. Railroad Ave., Portage, Pa.
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†HARVILLE, CARLTON L.Private	825 Shepherd St., Petersburg, Va.
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HYER, JAMESPrivate	322 Edmun St., Pittsburgh, Penna.
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†JOHNSON, WALLACE S.Private	1126 E. Market St., Charlottesville, Va.
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JONES, GORDONPrivate	Newcastle, Va.
JONES, SAM O.Private	Toms Creek, Va.
JONES, WALTER P.Private	2600 West Liberty Ave., Dormont, Pa.
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NEWMAN, OLIVER W.	Private	Chuckatuck, Va.
NORTON, BLAIR	Sergeant	McKinley St., W. Kittanning, Penna.
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OTT, ROY L.	Private	Holsopple, Penna.
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†PONELL, JOE	Private	McKees Rocks, Penna.
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PRICE, WILLIE W.	Private	Walker St., N. Emporia, Va.
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 SMITH, WALTER G. Bugler
 SMITH, WAVE A. Private
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 STEWART, ROY M. Corporal
 STINE, CLYDE E. Med. Det.
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 †TURNER, FRANK Private
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 ‡VERONESIA, JOHN Private
 VICKEY, CHARLES A. Private
 VICKREST, MICHAEL J. Private
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 WAGONER, RUSH Private
 WALL, JAMES R. Private
 WALLS, EDWIN L. Corporal
 WATERS, FRENCH W. Mess Sgt.
 WEBB, CLAUD Private
 *WEBB, HARVEY J. Private
 WEBB, MILLARD A. Private
 WELCH, JAMES A. Sergeant
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 ‡WHITE, WALTER Private
 WHITEHURST, HERMAN E. Private
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 68 Ceres Alley, Rear, Pittsburgh, Penna.
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 150 Park Ave., Washington, Pa.
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 RFD No. 3, Orange, Va.
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 509 Grant St., South Fork, Penna.
 Box 112, Berkeville, Va.
 Box 192, Forest City, N. C.
 510 Tunnellhill St., Gallitzin, Penna.
 81 Pearle St., Millsboro, Penna.
 2616 Cornet St., Pittsburgh, Penna.
 365 N. German St., Harrisonburg, Va.
 297 Delaware Ave., Johnstown, Penna.
 100 E. Walnut Ave., Altoona, Penna.
 Scottdale, Penna.
 Linn Haven, Va., RFD No. 1, Box 19½.
 315 Butler St., Etna, Penna.
 1801 Goode Ave., Norfolk, Va.

COMPANY "F" OVERSEAS.

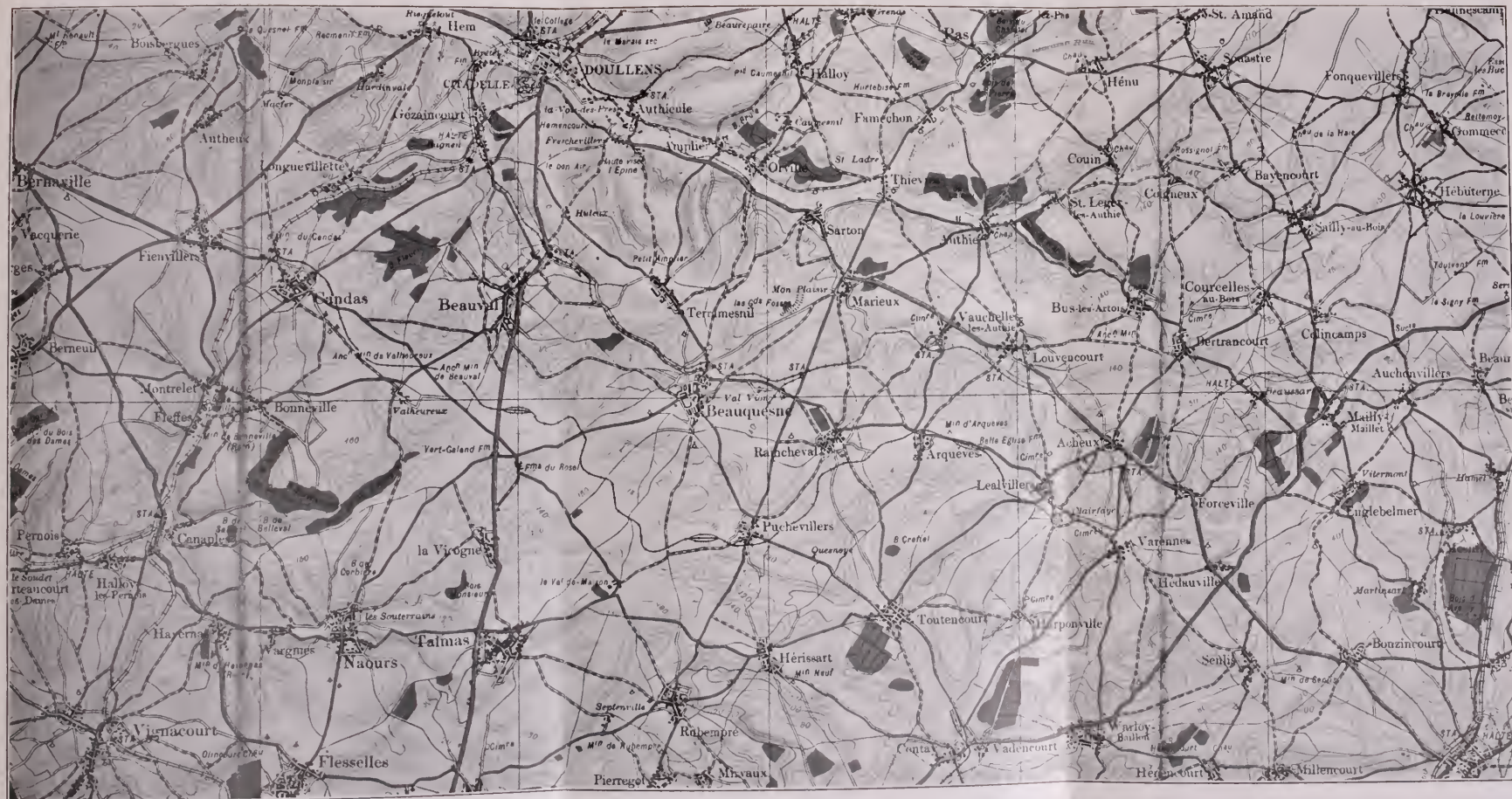
WILLIAMS, CLYDE A.	Corporal	Mosley Junction, Va.
WILLIAMS, JOSEPH E.	Private	58 River St., Sharon, Penna.
WILLIAMS, THOMAS	Corporal	Box 56, Elizabeth, Penna.
†WILLIAMS, WILLIAM H. ..	Private	Jacob's Creek, Pa.
WILLOUGHBY, WALTER M.	Corporal	445 H. Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.
WILLS, JOSEPH D.	Private	Sedley, Va.
WILSON, LLOYD E.	Private	346 W. 7th St., Tarentum, Pa.
WILSON, SAMUEL S.	Private	Mount Joy, Penna.
WINK, ORVILLE V.	Sergeant	Hustontown, Penna.
WISEMAN, JOHN E.	Private	M. B. Star Route, Staunton, Va.
WISSINGER, JOSEPH C.	Private	Leechburg, Penna.
WITTER, DOUGLAS	Private	Austin, Penna.
WOLF, JOHN F.	Corporal	118 Allegheny St., Hollidaysburg, Penna.
WOODWORTH, RALPH	Corporal	Box 133 Jamestown, Penna.
YOKIMCUS, VINCENTY	Private	42 N. 3rd St., Duquesne, Penna.
*YUCHNOW, HERAGIN	Horseshoer	
*ZANOTTO, ANTONIO V.	Private	Mine St., Leechburg, Penna.
ZILINSKY, JOSEPH J.	Sergeant	1116 Woodlawn Ave., Zanesville, Ohio.
‡ZINSSER, CHARLES F.	Saddler	5128 Butler St., Pittsburgh, Penna.

(*) Transferred Wounded

(†) Transferred Sick

(‡) Transferred for Duty





ARTOIS SECTOR

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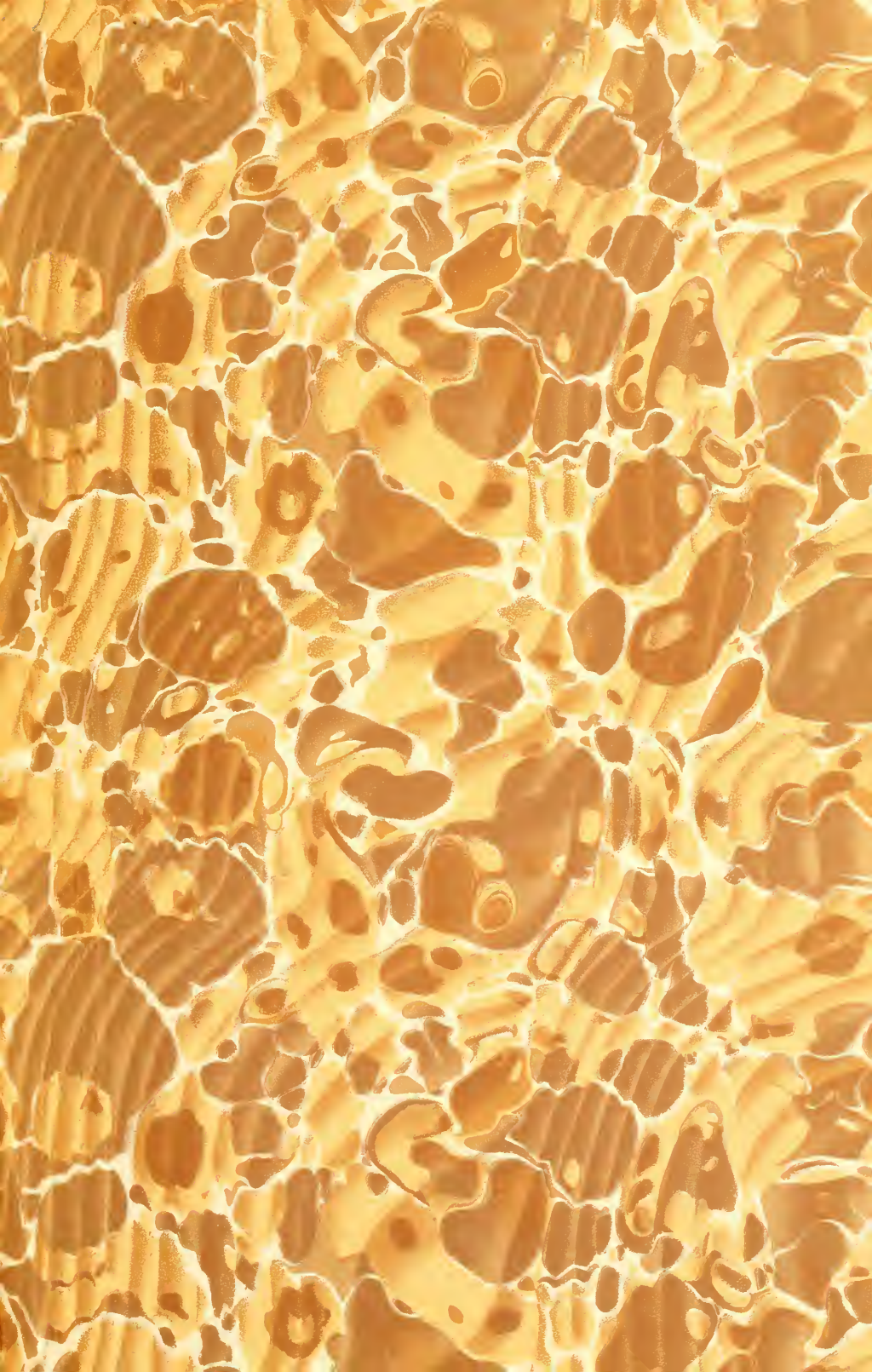
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